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THE
OLD STONE HOUSE;

OR,

THE PATRIOT'S FIRESIDE

BY

JOSEPH ALDEN, D.D.

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NEW YORK:
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P R E F A C E.

THE object of the following volume is to inspire the young reader with the spirit of patriotism, to render him familiar with some of the elementary principles of the science of government, and to acquaint him with the origin and formation of the Constitution of the United States. The writer desires to render to his young friends some assistance in qualifying themselves to discharge their duties as citizens of the republic.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE,
September, 1848.

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THE OLD STONE HOUSE,

OR

THE PATRIOT'S FIRESIDE.

CHAPTER I.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE OLD STONE HOUSE—AND OF
MAJOR MANTON AND HIS SON LAFAYETTE.



ON the summit of a gentle elevation, which overlooked a beautiful valley, stood a stone house, whose form betokened an ancient origin. As you drew near, you might see, in iron letters, on its front, the date of its erection, 1712. It was built by an emigrant from Holland, who selected that place on account of the fertile flats bordering the stream which flowed through the valley, and wound its way to the Hudson

When the Revolution came on, the house was occupied by a grandson of the builder, a young man of more ardor and energy than was often to be found among the quiet de-

scendants of the Dutch. Like many of his brethren, he remained firm in his loyalty to King George, and went so far as to raise a company of Tories for his service. When this became known to the republican government which had been established in the province, his property was confiscated, that is, was seized and sold for the benefit of the government. The farm was bid off by a speculating Yankee, (for such animals even then began to abound,) who did not venture to take possession of it till the war was over. There were many concealed Tories in the neighborhood, and the Indians were not a thousand miles off.

At the close of the war, the purchaser took possession, and soon sold out to Major Manton, from the old Bay State. Israel Manton entered the Revolutionary service as a private soldier, at the beginning of the war, and continued in it till our independence was acknowledged. At the close of the war he held a major's commission. He had risen to that rank solely by his merit.

The desire for going West, which has been increasing from that time until the present, led Major Manton to sell his little farm in the

Bay State, and go on a *viewing tour*, as it was called. In the course of his travels in the State of New York, he came to the stone house, noticed above, and after due deliberation, he purchased it. The owner was anxious to sell, in order that he might engage in land speculations farther toward the setting sun.

Major Manton, when he removed his family to his new home, induced many of his neighbors to accompany him. They purchased lands in the vicinity of his, and thus a thriving Yankee settlement was to be seen in a region which had seldom been visited by any but the Dutch. The meeting-house soon sent its spire aloft, and the log school-house stood near it; and in time, dwelling-houses were multiplied enough to constitute a small village. This was, however, at a little distance from the old stone house.

Major Manton had an only son, whom he named after the generous Frenchman who so efficiently promoted the cause of freedom. During a part of his soldier life, the Major had served under Lafayette's immediate command.

Lafayette Manton was a bright boy, and

his father took great pains with his education. He made it a prominent object to instil into his young mind an intense love of liberty, and the greatest admiration of Washington and the other patriots to whom, under God, we owe our deliverance from a foreign yoke. Night after night, the Major used to sit with his boy upon his knee, pouring into his willing ear the stories of the Revolution, and kindling up in his young heart the love of excellence and of freedom.


For the last ten years of his life, Major Manton was a soldier of the cross; and when he was summoned from time, he departed in full assurance of meeting the Great Captain of his salvation with joy, and of serving forever in his immediate presence.

Lafayette Manton was in his senior year in college when his father died. Having completed his collegiate course, the circumstances of the family seemed to render it necessary that he should devote himself, for a time at least, to the management of the farm. He became so much interested in it, that he soon laid aside the idea of studying one of the learned professions, and resolved to be an intelligent practical farmer for life. Susan

Coply, the minister's daughter, seemed to approve the plan ; for she soon left the parsonage, and took up her abode in the stone house, and took charge of matters there. Before she left the parsonage some simple ceremonies took place, which led people, ever afterwards, to call her Mrs. Manton instead of Susy Coply.

CHAPTER II.

THE GROWTH OF THE VILLAGE—MR. MANTON'S BOYS—
THE BLACKSMITH AND HIS NOTIONS.

R. MANTON, although he bore no title, civil or military, soon became the leading man in Millford—the name which was given to the place in room of a Dutch one, somewhat difficult for Yankees to pronounce. He filled his father's place in the church, and was very active in all matters adapted to promote the public good. The cause of education received a large share of his attention. The old log school-house was removed, and turned into a barn, and a neat, well lighted, framed building erected in its place. The village grew and prospered, until the school-house was not large enough to hold the scholars, and several new schools were opened by enterprising young women from the East.

In due time, Mr. Manton had three fine boys of his own. Every-body in the village

knew Mr. Manton's boys: they always looked so clean and behaved so well. Every-body in the village liked Mr. Manton's boys, and pointed to them as models of what boys should be.

Do you ask how this came about? I will tell you. Mr. and Mrs. Manton took great pains with their boys, and their boys took great pains with themselves. That was the secret of their improvement and popularity. Many parents take pains with their children, whose children do not take pains with themselves. The consequence is, that the pains of their parents is, for the most part, lost.

"Who is the best teacher in these parts?" said Mr. Potter, a blacksmith, who had just moved into the village. He had come to supply the place of one whose strong and skilful arm had been the admiration of the village boys, but who had recently felt the horrors of delirium tremens, and was rapidly sinking into the grave. New England rum was even then manufactured, and total abstinence was then unknown. "Who is the best teacher in these parts?" said Mr. Potter to Mr. Holden, the wagon-maker.

"Well," said Mr. Holden, removing some

spent tobacco from his mouth, for the poisonous qualities of tobacco were not then known, "Mr. Manton is rather the best one hereabouts, in my way of thinking."

"Mr. Manton? That's the man who lives in the stone house yonder, on the hill,—is'n't it?"

"Yes, that's the man."

"Does he keep school?"

"No, not after the regular school order; but for all that, he is in my way of thinking, as I said, the best teacher in this country. By that I mean to say, that he keeps the boys in order the best,—does the most towards making men of them. He don't keep school, for he works on his farm by day as hard as anybody, and he was brought up to college too; but the boys are mighty apt to get together at his house, and get him to talk to them. He seems to have a faculty of making men of them. I reckon my boys get more good by going there, than by going to school; though we have a pretty smart school-ma'am from down East. But you want a school for your boys: well, I don't know as it makes much difference which they go to—all the schools are pretty good I believe. The greatest difficulty

seems to be, that our school-ma'ams all get married as soon as they get their schools under headway, and that is an end of their teaching."

"I want to send my boy to the very best school," said Potter, in his earnestness raising his voice. "You see, I'm from the old country, and I heard that a way off in this country, a blacksmith's boy could be allowed to go to the best schools, and be as well treated as the best of them, if he behaved himself: and I said, That's the country for me. So here I am, and I believe the case is about as it was told me. Why, where I lived, in the old country, do you think my boy could go to school with the Minister's son? His Reverence, they called him,—I'm glad you haven't any such creatures here,—when you spoke to him you mustn't say, Sir, or Mister, but 'Your Reverence:—'—As I was saying, my boy couldn't go to school with his boy, or the Squire's. Not at all. Well, to see how different it is in your country, that is, in this country, or *my* country,—for it is mine now,—I say, just see how different it is here. The day after I got my bellows a-going, your Minister,—I mean *our* Minister, came

along with a boy on each hand, and stopped at the door of the shop, and said he, 'You mean to send your boy there to school?'

"'Of course I does,' said I. 'I don't know exactly what school to send him to: I'm a stranger here.'

"'You can't make any mistake,' said he. 'Our schools are all pretty good.'

"'Are you willing that my boy should go to school where yours do?' said I.

"'Willing!' says he: 'Why not? You have a right to send your boy where you please. The school which my oldest boy goes to is full, I believe; but there is room where my two younger ones go. I'm going right there now: come, go with me. I want to see that boy a learning; he looks like a bright boy.'

"Says I, 'Would you have me go with you, with my leather apron on?'

"'Why, yes,' said he, 'you will be back in a moment, and at your work: it is but a step. Come on.'

"'Bless your Reverence,' said I,—I said it before I thought, but I never said 'your reverence' so heartily before in my life,—'you're my minister, no matter what you believe. I

can't leave the shop now, for I've promised this job by noon, and shall have hard work to get it done ; but my boy shall be in school in a day or two.'—You see, the night before, the fellow that tends bar up at the tavern there, got hold of me, and tried to set me against the Minister, as proud, and holding to some pretty hard doctrine. But it was of no use. I know a gentleman when I see him : I've seen them before. I pretty much made up my mind then to send my boy where his'n went ; but I thought I would hear what you said about the schools."

"You think you will like this country, then ?"

"First rate, and no doubt about it. It isn't half so hard to work here ; that is, it isn't half so hard work to do the same piece of work here as it was there ; though I have to turn my hand to a good many more things than I did there. But then you are not very particular how a thing is done, if it is done strong ; so I think I shall be able to do about all I am called on to do in my line."


"What makes it easier ?"

"Why I can breathe easier. There isn't any proud ones looking down upon me, as if I

were a slave ; and what is more, there is nobody here treating my children as if they were born to serve them ! I don't count myself to be a very proud man, and I don't want my children to be proud ; I always want them to work for a living. But if they grow up I want them to feel that they are men and women, free men and women ; and that feeling a blacksmith's children can't have in the old country. They must not look any higher than the station in which they were born. I'm not one of those who think the poor have a right to fare as well as the rich ; I don't think any such thing ; but I am one of those who think there ought to be a chance for the poor to better their condition, and to rise in the world, if they deserve to ; and it's the glory of this country that it affords them a chance to do so.

CHAPTER III.

THE VILLAGE BOYS AT THE STONE HOUSE—THE IDEA OF LIBERTY AND OF A FREE COUNTRY--THE SOLDIER AND THE LAMB--THE HAYSTACK AND RIDE.

OWARD, has your father returned?" This question was addressed by William Palmer to Howard Manton, just after school was dismissed. A number of boys were within hearing, and seemed to wait earnestly for an answer to William's question.

"Yes," replied Howard, "he returned last night."

"Is he well?" said William.

"Very well."

"He asked us to come and see him, after he returned from the city. Do you think he would like to have us come to-night?"

I don't know any thing to the contrary: I wish you had spoken about it at noon, and then I could have asked him. I guess you had better come; if he is engaged, we can

play out-doors: it will be a fine moonlight night."

"I had rather not go if there is any probability of his being engaged; for if he knows we have come, he may disoblige himself to please us," said William, very considerately.

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Richard Wolcott; "let us go up there, and stop just before we get to the house, till William goes and sees if Mr. Manton wishes to see us. If he does, William can come and call us; and if he don't, he needn't let him know we are there."

"I don't think my father would like that plan," said Howard. "He never likes to have any secret things going on. The best way will be for you to come, and if he is engaged, he will say so: he is never too polite to speak the truth."

"Agreed," "let that be the way;" was uttered by several voices. At this moment Mr. Manton was seen passing in a wagon. "There goes your father," said Richard.

"I will ask him now," said Howard.

Mr. Manton stopped his horse, as he saw his son coming towards him. Howard made known to him the wishes of the boys. "Tell

them ' said Mr. Manton, " that I shall be happy to see them at half-past six o'clock." He drove on, and Howard made his report to the boys, to their evident delight.

" Now, boys," said Howard, as they were about to separate, " please remember that when my father says half-past six, he means half-past six,—he don't mean ten minutes before, nor ten minutes after that time."

" We will remember," was the reply.

Mr. Manton was a punctual man himself, and tried to make others punctual. He had succeeded so far as his boys were concerned. They were always at the school-house in time. They were always at meeting in time. " Come, it is time to go to meeting, for Mr. Manton's boys are going ;" was a phrase often uttered on the Sabbath, in families who lived on the road between the stone house and the meeting-house. One day the schoolmistress came to the school-room at precisely nine o'clock, as she supposed, and the Manton boys were not there. " They are not coming to-day," was her first thought. She began school. In a few moments they came in, and were a good deal surprised to find the school begun. " Something detained them," thought she, as she saw them enter ; " I

never knew it to happen before." When she went home at noon, she found that she had changed watches with the lady with whom she boarded, and that the watch which had governed her movements, was ten minutes too fast !

At half-past six, nearly a dozen boys presented themselves at once at the door of the stone house. They were shown in by Howard, and were seated around the large fireplace. It was late in October, and a fire was grateful, as diffusing warmth as well as cheerfulness in the apartment. The blacksmith's boy came among the rest : he felt a little embarrassed, and chose his place in one corner of the room, behind some of the other boys. Mr. Manton noticed his embarrassment, and addressed a few words to him for the purpose of putting him at his ease ; but he did not succeed in his benevolent design. The poor boy had been so little used to being spoken kindly and courteously to by those who were above him in society, that he could not get confidence enough to converse with Mr. Manton,—the man who was looked up to as much by the inhabitants of the village, as the Squire was in the village in which he used to live in old England. To

Mr. Manton's question if he was glad he was in a free country, he managed to say, 'Yes, sir.'

"Boys," said Mr. Manton, "what is a free country?"

No one replied.

"What do you say to that question, Richard?"

"This is a free country," said Richard.

"That is true, but we wish to know what a free country is, so that we may know one when we find it. What is a free country, William?"

"It is a country in which liberty is enjoyed," said William.

"What do you mean by liberty?"

"The privilege of doing as we please."

"Is that a good definition of liberty? Is there any one here who thinks that is not a good definition of liberty?"

No one made any reply to this question; in fact, all present thought that liberty consisted in the power to do as we please.

"The Irishman that I heard of must have had a just idea of a free country, and of liberty. He came to a fine peach orchard, and began to help himself very liberally to peaches

The owner questioned his right to do so. 'Aha, honey,' said Pat, 'and isn't it a free country I'm in?' Pat's idea of liberty, you see, was according to the definition just given, viz. *the privilege of doing as we please*. Pat went on, and at evening he told a farmer he believed he would sleep in his barn: the good-natured farmer made no objection. Having occasion to go into the barn for something, he found his lodger, lying at his ease on the hay, smoking his pipe. The farmer rebuked him sharply for endangering his property so carelessly: he ordered him to throw away his pipe. 'Isn't it a free country I'm in,' said Pat, 'and can't a man smoke in peace in a free country? I could smoke in old Ireland, if I could only get the tobacco.' So he held on to his pipe, determined to exercise his rights in a free country. The farmer seized a bucket of filthy water, that happened to be standing near, and threw it in Pat's face, thus extinguishing his pipe. As Pat was disposed to fight for his liberty, the farmer, (who was a very strong man,) seized him, and pitched him out of the barn head-foremost. Pat gathered himself up and went on his way, to enjoy his liberty in some other part of the country

What do you say, William, to Pat's dea of liberty?"

"It was not the right one, sir," said William.

"It is according to your definition."

"I know it, sir, but the definition is not right."

"Well, can you give a better one?"

"Liberty consists in being allowed to do as we please,"——

"Provided we please to do right," said Mr. Manton, finishing the sentence for him, after having waited a long time for him to finish it himself.

"Yes, sir," said William, "I think that will do."

"A free country, then, is one in which the people are at liberty to do as they please, provided they please to do right—that is, are free to do right, and are restrained from doing wrong. Every one is under obligation to do what is right; this every one will acknowledge—it don't need any proof. Now, if a man is free to do every thing that is right, and is hindered from doing nothing except that which is wrong, he certainly enjoys all the liberty he can ask for. No one can ask for liberty to do wrong,—there can be no such thing as liberty

to do wrong. Suppose the laws of a country forbid only that which is wrong, and are faithfully executed, then every one will be secure from wrong, and free to do right. What sort of a country would that be, which should have and execute such laws ?”

“A free country,” said William ; “but is there such a country in the world ?”

“There is no country in which the laws come fully up to this mark, and hence there is no perfectly free country in the world. So far as the laws and the execution of them in any country approach this standard, so far is that country a free country.”

“A perfectly free country, then,” said Howard, “would be a country of perfectly good laws.”

“Exactly so ; the perfection of law would be the perfection of liberty. I should like to have you all try to remember that expression.”

There was silence for a moment, except so far as it was broken by some whispered repetitions of the sentence, “the perfection of law is the perfection of liberty.”

“I always had a sort of idea,” said Thomas Hawkes. “that there was the most liberty

where there was not much of any law ; but I see I was wrong."

"What would be the state of things, if there were no laws forbidding wrong-doing ? what sort of a country would it be ?"

"It would be a free country, according to Pat's notion."

"I always thought," said another boy, "that this was a free country because we haven't any king over us."

"A country with a king at the head of its government may be a free country ;—it may have such laws as we have noticed above, and securities for their execution."

"But if a nation has a king, he can do as he has a mind to," said one ; "he may not have a mind to make such laws, or he may not have a mind to have them executed."

"A country in which the laws depend upon the will of a king, cannot be a free country ; in order to be a free country, there must be a government of laws, and the king must be bound by the laws as well as anybody else."

"I thought kings could always do as they pleased."

"It is only when they are possessed of absolute power, as it is called, that they can do

as they please. But all kings are not absolute monarchs: a king over a country that has a constitution, is bound by that constitution. If that constitution be a wise one, and the laws passed under it are wise, then the country may as really be a free country, as if it have the forms of republicanism."

"Now," said William, "I know the meaning of that sentence in the piece I spoke—'A constitutional monarchy is consistent with freedom!'"

"Father," said Howard, "I don't see but that a country under an absolute monarch may be a free country. Suppose the absolute monarch should make laws allowing every one to do what is right, and forbidding only that which is wrong, and should faithfully execute those laws? Wouldn't that country be a free country? I know it seems odd to say so."

"That is, it seems rather odd to call a country whose government is an absolute despotism, a free country."

"Yes, sir."

"It is essential to liberty, that there should be security against wrong. Now, if an absolute monarch should do as you have supposed, that

country might be said to enjoy liberty for the time being ; but it could not be called a free country, because it has no security for the continuance of such a state of things. The monarch may abolish all such laws whenever he pleases, and proceed to oppress the people. A slave may be permitted to go where he pleases, for a time, and he may for a time enjoy as much freedom as a freeman, yet he is not a freeman so long as he is liable at any moment to be wholly subjected to the will of another. In a free country, the laws must be supreme, there must be no human power above them. A slave may have a good master, and a country may have a good despot ; but neither can properly be said to be free."

The boys had paid very good attention to what had been said, though some of them wished Mr. Manton would tell them a story. He understood their wishes, and was willing to gratify them.

"I have heard," said he, "my father give some account of a soldier that was in his company, for a time, in the Revolution, whose notions of liberty were similar to those of Pat's. He met with some mishaps in carrying his notions of liberty into practice. He was a proud,

blustering fellow, and had a great deal to say about fighting for liberty. One day he thought he would treat his love of liberty with a lamb. They had nothing but salt provisions in the camp, and fresh meat was a great luxury. He walked three or four miles from the camp, to a pasture which was out of sight of any house. There was a flock of sheep in the pasture, and they were quite tame. Howell, for that was his name, went up to the flock, and easily caught a fine large lamb ; he laid him on the ground, putting his knee on his neck to hold him there, and put his hand in his pocket to draw out his knife, with a view of cutting the lamb's throat. Just before he got the knife out of his pocket, the old ram, who wore a monstrous pair of horns, came up behind him, and surveyed him for a moment ; then stepped backwards for a few paces, and then rushed forward, and gave him a blow that fairly sent his feet over his head, and rolled him down a declivity to the distance of two or three rods. The lamb jumped up and ran away, but Howell took his time for it. It was a long time before he could get up at all, and then he could hardly manage to reach the camp. His gait when he entered it differed materially from his custom

ary strut. His adventure was found out, and he suffered as much from the gibes of his comrades, as he did from the horns of the ram.

At another time, he thought he would exercise his liberty in taking some fowls from a farmer. The fowls roosted on the top of a hay-stack, and were thus considered out of reach. One night he took one or two with him, and carried a long pole which he placed against the stack. He succeeded in climbing it, and reached the place where chanticleer and his family were reposing in fancied security. He seized him first, and proceeded to wring his neck ; but chanticleer was disposed to make considerable resistance ; and in so doing, one of his spurs struck Howell in the eye. This caused him to let go his hold of the pole which passed up through the centre of the hay. In consequence he slipped off from the stack, on the side opposite to that which he had ascended. He felt himself sliding off, but as his feet were downwards, he didn't anticipate any harm. The stack about midway was much larger than it was at the bottom ; so that when he came to that part, he no longer slid, but dropped to the earth. It happened that an unbroken colt was sleep-

ing on that side of the stack. Hearing the noise made above his head, he rose up on his feet, just in time to receive Howell on his back. It happened that Howell fell on the colt's back in the position of one riding, only his face was not towards the colt's head. Away went the colt, as swiftly as he could run, and Howell had nothing to do but to sit still. He did not dare to throw himself off while the horse was under such headway. The field was large: the colt carried him around it several times, and then concluding, I suppose, that he had ridden far enough, threw up his hind-feet into the air, and deposited him on the ground. Howell came home to the camp without his hat. He was pretty much cured of his liberty notions after that."

"Did your father ever tell you what became of him, at last?"

"He didn't turn out well, as you may suppose. After he left the army, he set up a small grog-shop, and tried to get a living by selling rum, and by cheating. There wasn't as much rum drank in those days as there is now. He became very poor, and at last killed himself by drinking. He was found frozen to death one morning in the road. My father

said he belonged to a very orderly and upright family. His father and mother were good people, and all his brothers became respectable and useful men."

"If he was brought up well, how did he come to be so bad?" said William.


"I will tell you. When he was a boy, he got the idea that it was a very fine thing to play tricks on his companions. He did not do it out of malice, but because he thought it was smart. He used to spend a great deal of time in devising tricks, and in so doing, often found it convenient to trespass on the rights of others. He reconciled it to his conscience by saying that he had no bad motive, that he only did it for fun. He began to do wrong for fun, as he called it, and that led him into the habit of doing wrong, and then he could do wrong from other motives; and so he went on, till he had little sense of justice or right left. That is the natural course of wickedness. When, from any cause, you bring yourself to do what you know to be wrong, you will go on doing worse and worse. The only way to avoid becoming a bad man, is, not to begin to do wrong. I have talked to you as much as I have time to this even-

ing. If you will come to see me next Wednesday night, I will talk to you about some of the great men of the Revolution. You will like to hear about them?"

"Yes, sir, we shall," said Richard.

CHAPTER IV.

A GREAT MAN OF THE REVOLUTION—THE STORY OF
THE SELF-MADE SCHOLAR.

EDNESDAY night came at last, and the boys came to the stone house. "Boys," said Mr. Manton, "we are to talk about one of the great men of the Revolution to-night."

"About one of the great Generals, I hope," whispered one.

"No," said Mr. Manton, who overheard the remark, "not about one of the great Generals. I wish to set before you the character of one who did a great deal for his country, and never spilled a drop of human blood. I do not think there was one, except Washington, who did more for his country than did the great Bible Statesman, JOHN JAY. There was no man in the country that Washington thought more of."

"Did he ever serve in the army?" said William Palmer.

"No, but he was engaged in the civil service of the country from the commencement of the Revolution till the year 1801. More than a quarter of a century was given to his country."

"What offices did he hold?" said Howard.

"He was Chief Justice of the state of New York, a member of the Continental Congress, Minister to Spain, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Chief Justice of the United States, and Governor of New York. These and many other offices and trusts were held by him during the course of his public life. Very few men have been placed in circumstances of as great responsibility as he was."

"Which was the last office which he held?" said William.

"He was Governor of New York."

"Is the office of Governor of New York higher than that of Chief Justice of the United States?"

"By no means. The chief justiceship is the most honorable office in the country, except, perhaps, the presidency."

"Did they turn him out of the justiceship?"

"No, he resigned, in order to be Governor of New York."

“Why did he wish to be governor so much?”

“He did not wish to be governor at all. In the circumstances in which he was placed, he thought it was his duty to lay down a higher and accept of a lower office, and he did so. This was the principle which governed him throughout his public life. He never sought an office; he never asked himself, How shall I gain that station, or secure that advantage? the question which he always asked was, what is duty? The fame and influence he attained, affords a remarkable illustration of the declaration of the Saviour, ‘He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’”

“I never heard so much about Mr. Jay as I have about some other men—General Green, and General Putnam, and other generals.”

“People love to hear about military men. They will praise the man who has been the means of killing a few thousand men, more than they will praise the man who, by his counsels, has saved the lives of many thousands, and brought security and prosperity to ten thousand firesides. It is time that the young learn to admire and love those who save men’s lives, instead of those who destroy them. You have

not heard as much about Mr. Jay, as you have about men who did not do the country the thousandth part of the good which he did. To show you what Washington thought of him, let me tell you that, when the present constitution went into operation, Washington wrote to Jay, asking him to accept of any station in the government which it was in his power to bestow. He, after due consideration, decided that it was his duty to accept the office of chief justice. Probably there was no other man in the country, to whom Washington would have written such a letter. It shows what he thought of Mr. Jay's talents and qualifications for office. He was willing to commit any department of the government into his hands. I should deem it more honor to receive such a letter, than to receive all the shouts that have been given to the most successful warrior.

“There was another occasion, when Washington relied upon John Jay to do what could be done by no other man in America. While he was President, the French Revolution came on, and the people of the United States, grateful to the French for the aid given us in securing our liberties, rejoiced in the prospect of

their enjoying a similar blessing. When France and England went to war, the sympathies of the Americans were with the French. Many wished to join with France, and rush into a war with England. England too had continued to treat us very badly, and this increased the desire to go to war with her. Washington knew what a dreadful thing war was, and determined, if possible, to save his country from its terrors. He sympathized with the French, that is, he earnestly desired to see them enjoy the blessings of freedom; but he early foresaw how the revolution would turn out. He foresaw that France would fall into the hands of bloody and tyrannical men, and that to be the allies of a nation led by such men, would bring ruin upon the country. He determined to preserve a strict neutrality between the contending parties. He felt keenly the aggressions of England, but deemed it unwise to go to war with her, if it could be honorably avoided. As a last resort, he resolved to send Mr. Jay to England as Minister Plenipotentiary, to see if redress could not be secured, and the disputes between the two countries settled without an appeal to arms."

“What is meant by minister plenipotentiary?” said Richard.

It should be remarked, that Mr. Manton had given the boys liberty to ask him questions respecting any thing spoken by him which they did not understand.

“The word plenipotentiary, is composed of two Latin words; *plenus*, full, and *potentia*, power. It means a minister with full powers to negotiate a treaty on the part of the nation which he represents. Mr. Jay set out on his mission, and, after many months of arduous labor, succeeded in negotiating a treaty which secured for many years peace with England, and great prosperity to the United States. If we had gone to war with England at that time, no one can tell what would have been the result. We were, in some respects, in circumstances less favorable to carrying on a war then, than in the time of the revolution. George Washington, and John Jay, were the two men that saved the country from a war that would have cost thousands of lives, and many hundreds of millions of treasure. Had either of those men been taken away at that time, or had they been different men from what they were, war would have been inevitable.”

“Were the British afraid of Washington?” said Thomas, in a tone which sounded like an affirmation, rather than a question.

“No, they were not afraid of anybody, or any thing. They were not afraid of Washington, but they had perfect confidence in his integrity. They felt perfectly sure that he would do whatever he said he would do. They also had perfect confidence in the integrity of John Jay, and therefore believed him, when he told them what Washington’s views and wishes were. When John Jay told the British government, that Washington meant to preserve a perfect neutrality between England and France, that he meant to do just right towards England in all respects, they were sure it was so, and proceeded to form a treaty between the two countries.”

“What caused the British to have such confidence in the integrity of Washington and Jay?” said Howard.

“Their lives of uniform integrity. Neither of them, on any occasion, had been known to deviate from the path of truth and honesty. Both of them had been accustomed to view every thing in the light of duty. Jay had spent many years in Europe during the revo-

lution. He was minister to the court of Spain, and one of the commissioners to make peace with England at the close of the revolution; hence his character was pretty well known to the public men of England, and hence his power to save his country. The greatest honor any man can have is thus to possess the entire confidence of wise men. Now you can all secure in some degree this honor. In what way can you do it?"

"By always doing right," answered several voices.

"That is it; by always speaking the truth, by always being sincere in all your professions, and honest in all your conduct. This must be done in little things as well as in great things. By always pursuing this course, you will gradually form a character which will gain the confidence of all who know you, and give you more valuable friends, and greater influence, than can be gained by any other course. Some persons think they will gain something by pretending to be very friendly when they are indifferent, and by shrewdly pushing themselves forward; but they are in error. They may succeed for a time; but they will never have the influence which is given to sterling, straight-for-

ward honesty and integrity. Which is the most honorable of the two following ways of preventing war and great public evils? In one case, the confidence reposed in the character of the men charged with the management of the affair, leads to the desired result. In the other case, the managers are so shrewd and crafty, that they succeed by artifice and chicanery, in securing the same result. Which is the most honorable of the two?"

"The first mentioned," said one, and very general assent was given to his answer.

"I think one of the noblest scenes in the history of that stormy period, was the position occupied by Washington and Jay, the homage paid to their firmness and purity. The confidence reposed in the integrity of two men, saved two powerful nations from a bloody war. Young persons are apt to think that talent and bravery are of great consequence in public affairs, and that moral character is of not much consequence. But you see that moral character is of consequence, that it can sometimes do what talent and courage cannot do. These great men formed their own moral characters. They always patiently held on to the right. Was it not quite worth while to pay the atten-

tion to it which they did, when it gave them such power for good?"

"Were Washington and Jay alike in early years?" said William.

"The circumstances in which they were placed were quite different, yet their course of conduct was very similar. Both were remarkable for the obedience they always paid to their parents, both were very diligent in the use of the means of mental improvement, both always spoke the truth and revered religion. I recollect an anecdote which illustrates Jay's attachment to the truth. When he was in college, some mischief was done by some of the students in Jay's presence. The president asked several who were present, if they knew who did it, and they all answered, no, until the question came to Jay. He told the president that he did know. He would not lie, though the example had been set him by some older than himself."

"Which had the best advantages of education—Washington or Jay?" said Thomas.

"Mr. Jay had the better advantages. He had good schooling till he was fitted for college, and then he had the advantage of a full collegiate course. Washington, you know, did

not go to college. Both were very careful to make all the improvement in their power. After all, the improvement which persons make, depends much more upon their own efforts, than upon their teachers. If a person is determined to cultivate his mind, if he is determined to learn to think, if he is determined to lay up a store of useful knowledge, he will succeed. The difference in the attainments of men are owing much more to their resolutions than to the different advantages they possess. It is well for young persons to make use of the best advantages for acquiring knowledge which they can command, but they are not to despond because others have better advantages. Let them go to work, and do the best they can. If they only have a strong will, they will do wonders in time. I once knew a young man who had a strong desire for knowledge, but no means of gratifying it. He had no books, and little leisure, and he was bound to service till he was twenty-one. He resolved that he would have an education. He knew that it would cost him great labor. He did not expect to be able to do much till his time was out, but he resolved to do what he could. There were no books in the house in which

he lived, but the Bible, and an odd volume of history. He studied his Bible pretty well, and got all he could out of the volume of history. He then tried to borrow a few books. When he got a book, he would eat his dinner in half the usual time, and spend the moments thus saved in reading. Then when at work in the field, he would think over all that he read. By that means he made all that the books contained, completely his own. One day while in the physician's office, to get a tooth extracted, he saw an old Latin grammar lying neglected on a shelf. He borrowed it. He used to carry it with him night and day. When ploughing in the field, he would take it out and study it as he walked along in the furrow. Winter came on. He was too poor to furnish himself with candle light, so he ranged over the fields, and woods, and collected a large quantity of pine knots. By the light of these, he studied the long winter evenings. When the fire got low, so that it did not give out much light, he used to lay down on his back, with his head towards the fire, and study till the fire ceased to shed light enough to enable him to see. He was not fifteen years old when he began this course. He mastered the Latin grammar, pro-

cured a Greek grammar, and committed that to memory, and kept on with the same determined energy till he was eighteen years old, when his employer released him from further service. Though without money, by teaching in winter and working in haying in summer, and borrowing some money from friends which his perseverance had raised up for him, he got through college, and graduated at the head of his class. He became a distinguished man in the world, and served his generation well. There is not one who hears me, who has not better advantages than he had. Only determine that you will know something, and there is nothing in your way in this country. Every one can have a first-rate education, if he has a mind to."

"Would not the person you have been speaking of have had a better education, if he had been sent to school as soon as he was old enough, and kept at school till he went to college?"

"I think it is likely, nay certain, that he would have been a more accurate scholar in some things; but I doubt whether he would, on the whole, have had a better education: I doubt whether he would have had a

stronger mind. He himself was disposed to regard the discipline he had passed through as the best adapted to give him energy and perseverance. Now, my young friends, what we want in this country is men of strong minds, and warm and true hearts; and unless the boys resolve to become such men, and make themselves such, we cannot have them. We want a race of Jays, and Washingtons. We have no nobles in this country—no dukes, earls and lords, and we don't want them. We can get along without them, if we can have a race of such men as those just named. We shall not need any titled nobility to make our nation honored in the eyes of the world, if we can have such men. The names of George Washington and John Jay, carried more respect with them throughout Europe than those of any nobles of their times. I want my young countrymen to resolve to be like them, strong-minded, true-hearted men, who fear God, and fear nothing else. But I have given you a long lecture. At some other time I will tell you something more about the BIBLE STATESMAN."

CHAPTER V.

POLITICAL MORALITY—PUBLIC SERVICES NOT ALWAYS APPRECIATED—THE MAJORITY MAY DO WRONG—THE CHURCH AND THE SCHOOL-HOUSE.

MR. MANTON, we have come to hear some more about John Jay, if it is convenient for you," said William Palmer. "I should like to know, sir, why you called him the Bible Statesman?"

"Because he governed his conduct in all things by the Bible. There are some statesmen who think that the rules of morality do not apply to nations, or rather who think that, as public men, they must sometimes depart from that rule of right which they confess to be obligatory on them as private citizens. Mr. Jay made no such foolish distinction. He believed that duty pervaded public as well as private life, and he regarded the Bible as the standard, and directory of duty. He consulted it to know how he should act in public af-

fairs, just as much as he did to know how he should act in private affairs. 'God governs the world,' he used to say, 'and we have only to do our duty wisely, and leave the event with him.' It is because he always acted in view of the truth contained in those words, that I called him the Bible Statesman."

"Was Mr. Jay a professor of religion?" said Howard.

"Yes, he was a communicant in the Episcopal Church. He made no ostentatious professions of piety, but was always willing to have it known that he was a Christian. When he was in France, he was one day at dinner with a number of distinguished gentlemen who were infidels: the conversation turned on the subject of Christianity, which they seemed to regard as something obsolete and exploded. Mr. Jay kept silence, till one of them turned to him, and said, 'Do you believe in Christ.' 'I do,' said Mr. Jay, firmly and solemnly, 'and I thank God that I do.' There was nothing more said against Christianity at that table. Mr. Jay was, throughout his whole life, a plain, every-day Christian.

"In 1811 he was chosen President of the American Bible Society. In a letter to the

secretary of the society, in reply to the one giving him notice of his election, he lays down the principle that governed him in regard to offices. 'It has long and uniformly been my opinion that no person should accept an office, or place, unless he is both able and willing to do the duties of it.' After having mentioned his ill health, he says : ' Were I in a capacity to do the duties of the office, I should accept it without hesitation. I say without hesitation, because I should then as much doubt my having a right to decline, as I now doubt my having a right to accept.' Thus, in regard to every office that was offered him (and he never sought one in his life) the question was one of duty.

"His doubts in regard to the office last named were removed. He became President of the Society, and was yearly re-elected till the close of his life. He was also a member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and took a deep interest in its operations."

"I thought father said he was a member of the Episcopal Church," said Howard.

"So I did."

“Well, the American Board is an institution of the Congregational Church.”

“True, the Board is under the control of Congregationalists and Presbyterians, but that made no difference with such a man as Jay. He was no bigot. He professed to belong to the Episcopal Church, but he had fellowship for all Christians, and was willing to unite with them in efforts to do good.”

“Do you think it best for Christians of one denomination to belong to the societies of other denominations?”

“Not as a general thing, There are some great societies, such as the Bible Society for example, in which all Evangelical Christians unite; but in general, a man will extend his labor to best advantage, by working in connection with those of his own church. When Mr. Jay became a member of the American Board of Commissioners, there was no missionary society in the Episcopal Church. If there had been, I have no doubt he would have turned his contributions and influence into that channel. I said that Judge Jay was an every-day Christian. He experienced, in a high degree, the comforts and consolations of Christian hope. In a letter to his brother, he

says: 'I know, and that from experience, that more consolation is to be derived from a firm confidence in the wisdom of Him who governs the world, and from resignation to His will, who never errs, than from all other circumstances and considerations united. Our departed friends have but gone home before us. We must all follow; and, if prepared to follow, shall, after a little while, rejoin them where death or pain can never intrude.'

"Again, in a letter to his daughter in similar circumstances, he writes: 'You have your troubles, my dear daughter, and I *feel* as well as observe them. But I comfort myself with the reflection, that they are permitted for wise and benevolent purposes; and that these purposes include a rich reward to the sound mind, and the sound principles, on which those troubles operate as trials. Perfect wisdom and perfect goodness, united with infinite power, form a perfect title to perfect trust and confidence. In such confidence it is absolutely *impossible* for us to be mistaken or deceived. This is no visionary theory; it is practical prudence and real common sense.

"We cannot too frequently recollect, that, if the Scriptures are *true*, (and neither of us

doubt it,) it *must* also be true, that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” Afflicting dispensations therefore are proofs of his *love*, and not of his displeasure. He sends them “for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness;” and although “no chastening for the *present* seems to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, *afterward*, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.” The Divine veracity can never be questionable.’

“Again, in a letter to a friend he said, ‘I perceive that we concur in thinking that we must go home to be happy, and that our home is not in this world. Here we have nothing to do but our duty, and by it to regulate our business and our pleasures.’

“These are specimens of his habitual style of speaking and feeling in regard to religious subjects. You may say it was easy enough to write so: many men have written piously. True, but John Jay never wrote or spoke what he did not feel.”

“If Mr. Jay was such a good man, and Washington thought so much of him, and he did so much for the country, is it not strange

that the people did not elect him President, next after Washington?" said Richard.

"I think it is quite likely he would have been chosen President, if it had not been for the treaty he made with England."

"What! the one that saved the country from a war?"

"Yes."

"I thought that was the greatest service he ever did the country."

"So it was, and the act, I think, cost him the presidency."

"I don't see how that could be?"

"The people don't always know who are their best friends. There were many people at that time so bent on going to war with England, that they were greatly enraged to find that a treaty had been made. They didn't stop to inquire whether it was a good one or not; they began to attack it, and excite the people against it, before it was printed. The most violent abuse was heaped upon Jay for making it, and upon Washington for approving it. Jay was burnt in effigy in several places, and the epithet of traitor was freely bestowed upon him. You have never read more violent language than was employed

against Jay and Washington for their agency in the matter of the treaty."

"Wasn't the treaty a good one?" said one.

The other boys seemed to think this was rather an unnecessary question, after what Mr Manton had said about its saving the country from a bloody and destructive war. Mr. Manton, however, was not displeased that the question was asked.

"The treaty is now acknowledged to have been a good one: every one now admires the wisdom that could secure one so good. Long before his death, Mr. Jay had the satisfaction of knowing that there was but one opinion respecting the value of his services in that important matter. What does the fact which we have just considered prove, in respect to the people? Some of you may give an answer."

"It proves,—at least it seems to me it does, that the people may be mistaken, said Howard."

"You speak with hesitancy, as if there was some doubt about it."

"It seems to me to be so; but the politicians and newspapers tell us, that the people always know what is best, and that their will is always to be obeyed.

"You must always draw your own conclu-

sions from facts,—must not adopt those of others when you don't see their truth. You must do your own thinking. It is one of the birthrights and duties of a republican, that he do his own thinking. You may examine the views of others; but your opinion must be your own, drawn from facts and evidence as they appear to your own mind. What is your conclusion from the fact, Richard?"

"Some of the people are wrong, but not all of them. The majority are right."

"Mr. Jay lost his popularity with the majority of the people by that treaty."

"Well, sir, the majority are right in the end: they are right now."

"The people, or a majority of them, sometimes correct their errors and their prejudices, but not always. The fact that they are often in error, that they are often swayed by prejudice, cannot be denied by any one who has had any opportunity for personal observation, or who has any acquaintance with history. Whenever you hear a man talking about the infallibility of the people, that is, declaring that they are always right, and wise, and patriotic, set him down at once as a demagogue, as a deceiver, and liar. He knows

better. He is trying to deceive them by the very act. The blasphemous expression, '*the voice of the people, is the voice of God*,' ought to be rebuked whenever it is uttered. It is a maxim of the British government that the king can do no wrong. What is the corresponding maxim in this country, William?"

"The people can do no wrong," said William.

"Which is the most absurd of the two?"

"I don't know, sir : both of them are false."

"Undoubtedly. In monarchical countries, there is a tendency to ascribe too much wisdom and merit to the king ; and in republican countries a tendency to ascribe too much wisdom and merit to the people. Sensible men, in both countries, should guard against these tendencies. The people have a right to be wise and virtuous, and are under obligations to be wise and virtuous. We are to labor to make them wise and virtuous. Each one must make himself wise and virtuous, and labor to assist others in becoming so. What are the means to be employed to render the people wise and good?"

"Education," said several of the boys.

"If all the people are well educated, in the

common sense of the term, would they all be wise and good? Is every good scholar of necessity a good man?"

"No, sir: one may study hard without taking any pains to be good."

"Some of the worst men I have ever known were well-educated men, so far as science and literature were concerned. The notion is too common among our countrymen, that intellectual cultivation is all that is wanted to make men wise and good. Hence a great deal is said about schools, and little about churches. Now the school-house is very important to the welfare of this country, depending, as that welfare does, on the character of the people; but the meeting-house is still more important. 'Every thing,' said John Jay, speaking of the future prospects of this country,—'every thing depends upon churches and school-houses.' What do you suppose he meant, Richard?"

"I suppose he meant that religion and knowledge would be the salvation of the country."

"Certainly. And which do you think is the most important of the two—I mean with reference to the prosperity of the nation?"

“I don’t know, sir ; both are very important, I should think.”

“Is it owing to the school-house, or to the church, that life and property are so secure in this country ?”

“To the church.”

“I think so. The moral principles, the love of right, the love of our neighbor, and a regard for God’s law, are mainly developed by the teachings of the sanctuary. The teachings of the school-house, and the church, ought not to be so far apart as they too often are. Education, in its most comprehensive sense, includes the cultivation of all the powers of the soul,—of the conscience, and the will, and the temper, and the sympathies, as well as the cultivation of the reason and the memory. A good and true education will aim at the proper development of all these powers. Now our moral powers and affections are best developed through the agency of religious truth, and hence religious instruction is just as important as mathematical or historical instruction. When we regard man as a moral as well as a political being ; when we consider that he is not to be educated for time only, but for eternity, it becomes far more important.

“We have now considered one of the lessons taught by unpopularity, which the celebrated treaty brought upon its author. I wish now to commend to your admiration and imitation, the noble manner in which he breasted the storm. He foresaw it all. He knew what would be said about him; for he knew the state of the parties in the country, and he knew human nature. But it made not the slightest difference with him. He went straight forwards, doing what he thought was his duty, acting fully on the principle that he had nothing to do but to do his duty wisely, and leave the event with God. It may often happen, that you may be placed in circumstances which will make it odious for you to stand up for the right. Do it, however, manfully, knowing that the time will come when increased respect will follow your firm integrity. If Jay had yielded to the popular will at that time, he might perhaps have been President, but his name would not have gone down to posterity with the honor which is now attached to it.”

“Don’t you think he was sorry that he couldn’t be President?”

“No, I do not believe he had one feeling of

regret about it. There are very few men who can resist the temptation of so brilliant a prize. Many public men have said that they preferred the quiet of a private station, but nobody believed them. Such professions deceive no one. But when Washington says that he became President with great reluctance, and would much rather have remained a private citizen, we believe him. And so also when John Jay says so, we believe him :—his word was as good as Washington's. The following is his assertion in regard to his public life. How many statesmen could in truth make the same affirmation? 'In the course of my public life I have endeavored to be uniform and independent ; having from the beginning of it in 1774, never asked for an office or a vote, nor declined expressing my sentiments upon such important public measures as in my opinion tended to promote or retard the welfare of our country.' ”

“Could anybody get in now, if they pursued such a course ?” said Howard.

“I can't say, but I can say that such is the right, the manly, the noble course. Men who will pursue such a course, and leave the result with God, we must have, or our country can-

not prosper. Such men you must be, my lads :—what is there to hinder it ?”


“ Nothing,” said one ; “ but we couldn’t do the country any good, if we were the only ones who did so.”

“ You don’t know what good you would do. I am sure you would do a great deal ; but that is not the question to ask. The question is, whether that is not the course that all republican citizens *ought* to pursue ? If you answer yes, then you acknowledge that the obligation rests on you. Meet it at once ; do not say you will think about it, and attend to it at some future time.”

An evening was named for a future meeting, and the young auditors retired.

CHAPTER VI.

MILITARY AND MORAL COURAGE—THE PATRIOT IN RETIREMENT—HIS DEATH.

HE conversations, or rather the conversational lectures at the Stone House, were the subject of frequent discussion among the boys when they met together in the school-house, and at other places. There were none who could fail to admire the character of the Bible statesman, so far as it had been presented to view, or to acknowledge that his example was not capable of imitation by them all. Still there were some who entertained a high idea of military talent and bravery, and could hardly allow that Jay's character was worthy of more respect and reverence than that of any general except the immortal Washington.

"I say," said Richard, "that I like courage; I like the man who has courage, as well as other things. Washington had courage, and

so had Hamilton, and a great many others. Mr. Jay was always in safe places, and if he had courage, did'nt show it."

"I am not quite sure that he had quite ambition or pride enough," said William. "I like to see a man insist on his just rights."

"Don't let us spend time in talking about what we are ignorant. Let us ask Mr. Manton about Mr. Jay's courage; he can tell us all about it."

This proposition was agreed to, and they proceeded on an expedition for chestnuts.

When next they met at Mr. Manton's, the question respecting Mr. Jay's courage was asked him.

"I have no doubt," said he, "that if duty had called Mr. Jay into the field, he would have exhibited as much cool daring as any man in the whole army. The man who feared God as truly as he did, seldom fears man. Then he had all the requisites for bravery: he had a firmness that nothing could shake. Did it require no courage to do what I told you he did in relation to the treaty with Great Britain, when he knew that a host of envenomed darts would be hurled at him for it? Many a man could have charged to the can-

non's mouth more easily than he could have withstood the odium that Jay calmly breasted, and waited patiently for it to spend its force. Moral courage of this kind, is a far brighter attribute of character than physical courage. In moral courage, I know of no one that history informs us about, superior to Jay."

"Would not his character," said Howard, "have appeared a little more worthy of admiration, if he had had a little more ambition—if he had—I don't know hardly how to express myself—"

"If he had assumed more of the port and bearing of a great man:—is that what you mean?"

"Yes, sir, very nearly."

"It was his modesty, his entire simplicity of manner, his entire forgetfulness of the fact that he was a great man, that gave a peculiar charm to his character. It was said of him, that a man might live with him for weeks, and never learn from any thing that he said, that he had ever been in the public service of his country. But if any one supposes that this was owing to a want of spirit, he is greatly mistaken. While he never thought of his own dignity, I mean never put forth any claims to

deference ; yet, where his country was concerned, he showed the most lofty and independent spirit. When he was Minister to the court of Spain, on one occasion, the Spanish minister wished to enter upon some negotiations with him. On such occasions it is customary for the ambassadors to exchange copies of their powers, or the commissions received from their respective Governments. The Spanish minister wished to depart from that usage ; but Jay thought that the ambassador of the United States should be treated just as the ambassadors of other nations were treated, and he would not consent to enter upon any diplomatic business until there was a formal exchange of powers. Dr. Franklin, who was in Paris at that time, thought that he had better dispense with the form, as it was called, and the French minister, Vergennes, gave him the same advice. But Jay was firm. He knew that the Minister of the United States should be treated as other ministers were treated. As a man, he claimed no forms of respect ; but as the representative of the United States, he insisted on receiving all that was due."

"Father," said Howard, "didn't Washing-

ton do the same thing—that is, the same in principle?”

“To what do you allude?”

“Why, you know that during the Revolution, the British general sent him a letter addressed to George Washington, Esq., and he wouldn’t receive it: and then another was sent, addressed to George Washington, &c., &c., &c., and he wouldn’t take that.”

“The principle, as you say, is the same. Washington thought that the honor of Congress demanded that he should be addressed by the title they had conferred upon him: he insisted upon it, and carried his point. The same principle was regarded in his intercourse with foreign nations, when he was President. He exacted from every nation all the forms of respect due to an independent nation. But I was going to mention another instance in which Jay stood firm for the honor of his country. The King of France, you know, assisted us greatly during the Revolution, and Congress, in their gratitude, directed our ministers in Europe to do nothing which was not in accordance with the advice of the French court. Jay thought that these instructions were degrading; he thought it humiliating that the am

bassadors of an independent Republic should act only at the dictation of the French minister. When the English government signified their desire to make peace, Mr. Jay, Franklin, and Mr. Adams, were the commissioners on the part of the United States, to make a treaty of peace. The English commissioner met them at Paris, and wished to proceed in forming a treaty. Mr. Jay insisted that the English government should first acknowledge the independence of America. The English commissioner contended that the very act of making a treaty with the United States was, in fact, an acknowledgment of their independence; and further, that there should be an article in the treaty expressly acknowledging our independence. Mr. Jay insisted that our independence should be first acknowledged, that the treaty might then proceed, as between two sovereign independent nations. Dr. Franklin differed from Mr. Jay, and was disposed to be content with the implied acknowledgment. The French minister, Vergennes, advised Mr. Jay to yield. But Jay thought the honor of his country was concerned, and would not yield, though he was instructed by Congress to follow the advice of the French minister.

He firmly refused to treat, till our independence was acknowledged. The English commissioner was obliged to send to England, and inform his Government of the state of the case. They gave him power to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and thus the firmness of Jay triumphed. The European diplomatists found that the young republic had one man, at least, whose sagacity they could not deceive, whose firmness they could not shake."

"How old was Mr. Jay when he retired from public life?"

"He was fifty-six years old. He retired to his farm in Bedford, Westchester county, where he spent nearly thirty years in the most peaceful and dignified retirement. A more beautiful example of a great man living in true republican simplicity never was seen. He, who had been President of Congress, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Governor of his native State, the Representative of his country, at several of the first courts of Europe, and Chief Justice of the United States, lived on his farm, maintained habits of the utmost simplicity, and spent his time in doing good

until he fell asleep in Jesus, in the year 1829, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

“The year before he retired, he was offered again the Chief Justiceship of the United States. You will be willing to hear the following letter written to him by John Adams, at that time President of the United States.

‘DEAR SIR,

Mr. Ellsworth has resigned his office of Chief Justice, and I have recommended you to your old station. This is as independent of the inconstancy of the people, as it is of the will of a President. In the future administration of our country, the firmest security we can have against effects of visionary schemes, or fluctuating theories, will be in a solid Judiciary; and nothing will cheer the hopes of good men’s minds, as your acceptance of this appointment. You have now a great opportunity to render a most signal service to your country. I therefore pray you to consider of it seriously, and accept it. I had no permission from you to take this step, but it appeared to me that Providence had thrown in my way an opportunity, not only of marking to the public the spot where, in my opinion,

the greatest mass of worth remained collected in one individual, but of furnishing my country with the best security its inhabitants afforded against the increasing dissoluteness of morals.

With unabated friendship, and the highest esteem and respect,

‘I am, dear sir, yours,

‘ JOHN ADAMS.

‘P. S. Your commission will soon follow this letter.’

“You see President Adams thought of Mr. Jay just as President Washington did. Was it not some reward that such men should thus esteem him?”


“On another occasion President Adams said, ‘I often say, that when my confidence in Mr. Jay shall cease, I shall give up the cause of confidence, and renounce it with all men.’ To have the confidence reposed in him by the greatest and best of men thus expressed, was it not better than to be called brave, and hailed as the hero of some bloody battle-field? Mr. Jay had made up his mind, that it was right for him to retire from public life, and hence declined the office. He died, as I

said, in the year 1829, and history has handed down to posterity his name, as pure a patriot as ever lived.

“It is a matter of great thankfulness, that the two highest offices in our Government should be held in the beginning by such men as George Washington and John Jay,—the first President and the first Chief Justice of these United States. America has produced many able, many patriotic men, but there are no names that shine with a lustre equal to those of Washington and Jay. I hope you will study the lives of both these men. Every young American should know their history by heart.

CHAPTER VII.

A CONVERSATION AT THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP.

66  WILL you put a band on this wheel for me?" said Mr. Holden, as he entered Mr. Potter's shop one morning.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Potter; "that is just the very thing I will do, and that in a hurry."

He put on his leathern apron, and began to blow up the fire on the forge; when John Tilson, the son of a rich man who had recently moved into the village, rode up on horseback, and said, "Mr. Tilson says you must put a shoe on this horse immediately."

"I will do it," said the blacksmith, "as soon as I have done a job that Mr. Holden is waiting for. 'First come, first serve,' you know."

"He can wait," said John. "Father said you must do it immediately,—and you must."

Mr. Potter looked at the lad for a few

seconds, and then went to making a band for Mr. Holden's wheel.

"Do you not mean to shoe him?" said John, in an angry tone of voice.

"Yes; I will do your work when your turn comes: if you don't see fit to wait, you must go elsewhere."

"I shall tell father," said John: and he rode away.

"You will have the old man down upon you," said Holden.

"It may be: he is not the most reasonable man that I have met with in this country. He would get along better in the old country, provided he were one of the great folks."

"He thinks he is one of them, and that is the great trouble with him. He does not believe that all men are born free and equal."

"Neither do I."

"You don't!"

"No: I do not believe that all men are born equal, or that Providence designs that all should be equal."

"Well, I declare, you must retain some of your old monarchy notions. From a conversation I had with you last fall, when you advised with me about sending your boys to

school, I concluded that you were a thorough-going republican."

"So I am. I was a republican at heart when I was under the king ——."

At this moment Mr. Tilson entered the shop. He had evidently been walking very fast, for his face was red, and his breathing hurried. Before Mr. Potter could bid him good-morning, he asked, "What is the reason my horse cannot be shod, as I directed?"

"I was busy on this wheel when your son came. I told him I would do it as soon as I had finished this job. There," said he, as he drove the last nail,—“now, if your horse were here, I could put on a shoe in short order."

"I wanted it done then," said Mr. Tilson, with great emphasis.

"I could not do it then, but I can do it now."

"I am not sure that I shall have it done now."

"I am sure you will not have it done by me. You don't seem to know what sort of a country you live in. You need not send here to have any more work done until you are willing to take your turn with your neighbors."

"I shall not patronize such a man," said Mr. Tilson, as he turned, and left the shop.

"Served him right," said Mr. Holden; "I wish every one would stand up to him in the same way, and it would cause him to lower his sails. I see that you *act* on the principle, that all men are equal, if you do not believe it."

"I do not believe that Tilson is equal to you, or to that neighbor," pointing to Mr. Manton, who was seen approaching.

"I agree to your last remark: Manton is a true man, every inch of him."

"Good-morning," said Mr. Manton; "are you busy now?"

"I have just finished this wheel for friend Holden, and am ready to do any thing for you."

"I only want a link put in this piece of chain."

The iron out of which the link was to be made, was placed in the fire, and the left hand of the blacksmith applied to the lever that moved the bellows.

"Potter is no republican, after all," said Holden. "He does not believe that all men are born free and equal."

"I believe," said Potter, "that all men

ought to be born free ; but I don't believe that all men ought to be equal ; that is, in a sense in which some seem to understand equality."

"The prejudices of early life hold on to a man for a long time," said Mr. Holden.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Manton, "you do not understand just what Mr. Potter does believe. One reason why men appear to differ so much in their opinions is, that they do not understand one another."

"I will try to tell you what I do believe. I do not believe that all men are equal in talent or in possessions : I do not believe that Providence designed that all men should be equal in these respects."

"Do you not believe that one man is as good as another?" said Mr. Holden.

"That depends on the manner in which he behaves himself : as I said just now, I do not believe that Tilson is as good as you are, because he does not behave as neighborly."

"Don't you believe that all men have the same rights, whether they are rich or poor?"

"They have the same rights in regard to some things. They have the same right to breathe ; the same right to the proceeds of their own labor ; the same right to seek the

promotion of their own happiness. The mistake that some make is this ; they seem to think that all men are, or ought to be, equal in condition. Now, I do not believe any such thing. It isn't possible that there should be an equality of condition among men. There is no reason in claiming that as a right which cannot possibly happen."

"That may be ; yet, in a republican country, one man is as good as another. The great benefit of a republican country is, that you need not have any one to look down upon you."

"There are some men in this republican country that have a right to look down upon me ; or rather, there are some men whom I feel bound to look up to. The great glory of a republican country seems to me to be this : that it removes the obstacles in the way of a man's reaching such a station as he may secure a right to. I have thought a great deal of these matters since I have been in this country, and it has appeared to me that some of the people carry their ideas of equality too far. Mr. Manton, what do you think the equality of true republicanism consists in ?"

"It consists in all men's having an equal right to the government of law."

"You mean," said Mr. Holden, "that all men have an equal right to make the laws."

"No: I mean that all men have an equal right to the protection of law. That, as I understand it, is the true political equality of republicanism."

"That is my idea exactly: that is, I believe that, though I never had it before my mind in just that shape before," said Mr. Potter.

"But, do you not believe," said Holden, addressing Mr. Manton, "that all men have an equal right to make the laws?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because all men are not equally qualified to make laws. A man has no right to do what he is not qualified to do. A man who is ignorant of medicine has no right to prescribe for the sick. A man who has no knowledge of a steam-engine, has no right to attempt to navigate a steamboat. A man who is ignorant of the objects and effects of laws has no right to make them."

"There are a great many, then, who in your judgment have no right to take part in

making the laws : they cannot then be under obligation to obey the laws that are made."

"Why not?"

"Because all laws owe their authority to the consent of the governed."

"Do you find that written in the Bible?"

"No, sir ; but there is something like it in the Declaration of Independence."

"That is true, but the Declaration of Independence was not given by inspiration of God. Take the Law of God ; does it depend upon the consent of any man whether he is under obligation to obey it or not?"

"No ; but that is a different thing from human laws."

"Are not children bound to obey the laws of the land before their consent is asked or given?"

"Yes ; but their parents gave their consent for them."

"Still that is not the consent of the governed. The truth is, man was made to obey law, just as water was made to obey the law of gravitation. When a man shall obey the just laws of the land, it does not depend upon his consent at all. All men find themselves subject to laws which they never had any

hand in making. They may just as well complain of being born without their own consent, as to complain of being subjects to law without their consent. But we have all too much to do to stand here all day. We have got upon a subject that I am to talk to the boys about to-morrow evening, and perhaps you would like to come over to hear what we have to say. I shall be glad to see you both, and the boys won't object to your being there."


"I will be there," said Mr. Holden. "I have heard a great deal about those meetings. I think they have done the boys a great deal of good."

"I shall be glad to come," said Potter, "if I shall not disturb you, though I always hear pretty much all that is said there. My boy never fails to be there, and he has a wonderful memory, and tells me all that was said."

Mr. Manton's chain being now mended, he set out for home. Holden lingered for a few moments; but as Potter showed by the earnestness of his blows upon the anvil, that he had no more time to lose that morning, he shouldered his wheel and went to his shop.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MACHINERY OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT
NOT DEvised BY MAN.

HE boys were at the Stone House at the appointed time. Soon Mr. Holden and Mr. Potter came in, saying to the boys that they had come to join them. The looks of one or two expressed some disapprobation; and one whispered to his neighbor, that they were "rather old boys." Mr. Manton conversed with them for a few moments, and then turned to the boys:—"William," said he, "how did it come to pass that men came to live together in society? Why does not each one live by himself, as the wild beasts do?"

"Because they are not wild beasts," said William.

"You have given a pretty good answer; still it does not bring out the points that I wish to place before your minds. I will ask

all of you the question. How did men come to live together in a social state, and have a government and laws?"

"Because," said William, "they found that they could not get along very well without society and government."

"You suppose, then, that men met together in early times, and agreed to live together in a social state, and have government and law."

"Yes, sir."

"That is what is called the social compact; is it not?" said Howard.

"Yes; but no such compact was ever made. We have no proof that any such compact was made; and we know that, from the nature of the case, no such event could have taken place."

"I do not see, then," said Thomas Hawkes, "how men ever came to get together."

"They came together because they were men, and not wild beasts, as William said. Man is so formed that society is necessary to his existence as man; that is, no one can be a complete man unless he lives in a state of society. A bear may be a complete bear, though he lives by himself in his cave all his days; but a man cannot be a complete man

unless he enjoy the society of his fellow-men Society is natural to man. It is his natural state ; a state into which, as I have already said, he is born, and to the regulations of which he is subject, whether he gives his consent or not."

"Has not a man a right to live in solitude if he chooses to do so ?" said William.

"There may be circumstances which may justify a temporary retirement from the world ; but I suppose you mean to ask whether each and every one may not live in solitude ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Which is the same, you see, as asking whether human society does not depend upon the voluntary consent of those who constitute it. To set this matter in a clearer light, I will ask you some questions :—Did you ever see a hermit ?"

"Yes, sir : when I was on a visit to my grandfather, last fall, I went to visit one who lived in a cave about two miles from the village."

"What sort of a creature was he ?"

"He did not look much like a man. He was almost as black as a negro : he was covered with rags, and could not speak so that

I could understand him. He looked like a wild man."

"If all men lived in solitude as he did, would their condition be any better than his?"

"I do not know, sir. I do not think it would be much better."

"Would it be right for all men to live as he did, and to reduce themselves to his condition?"

"I do not think it would."

"Certainly it would not. Men have no right to reduce themselves to the level of the brutes. They are under obligation to be men. They are under obligation to pursue such a course as shall promote the highest perfection of their nature. A social state is a necessary condition to this; and hence, men are under obligation to live in a social state."

"I now understand what Mr. Simpson meant when he said 'society is of divine origin,' " said Howard.

"I presume he meant to say that civil society results from the constitution of man's nature, and is therefore the work of God: just as the tree, the growth of which is the result of the laws of nature, is the work of God."

"Yes, sir; he used that very illustration"

“Can you now answer this question, William :—Suppose all the men in a country should meet together and vote to dissolve society and government : suppose they were to resolve unanimously, that each one should live by himself,—would such a course be right ?”

“No, sir.”

“Why not ?”

“Because they would not make that progress in improvement in knowledge and virtue which they are born to make.”

“Very well : but how do you know that men are born to make progress in knowledge and virtue ?”

“I do not know as I can give the reason : but it seems to me that they are.”

“No doubt they are thus bound. It is a self-evident truth, that man is under obligation to do right ;—to strive to reach the highest perfection of which he is capable, does not need proof.”

“If men are bound to have society and government,” said Howard, “may they not adopt any form of government which they please ?”

“The people may determine the form of government, but they are under obligation to

adopt the best form ; that is, the form best adapted to secure the ends of government. Suppose you are under obligation to relieve a particular case of distress, may you use just such means as you choose ?”

“ I ought to use such means as are the best adapted to the end.”

“ Just so in the matter of government ; men ought to choose the form the best adapted to meet the end to be secured. This will differ in different circumstances. Thus men may be under obligation to adopt one form of government in one country, and another in another. Is government of human or divine origin ?—Thomas, what do you say ?”

“ It is of divine origin.”

“ Yes ; government is an institution of God, with which men are not at liberty to dispense. As it is an institution of God, it ought to be conducted according to his will, and must be if it would long prosper. When the acts of government set at nought the law of God, the nation that permits such acts will sooner or later be punished. The justice of God, as revealed by nature and revelation, authorizes this assertion : the punishment of nations al-

ways takes place in this world. Can you give the reason, any of you ?

“ Because nations have no existence in the next world.”

“ Very well ; I think I have now shown you that the great machinery of human society and government is no device of man. God is the maker, therefore. Man can mar, but cannot destroy it. God’s law applies to the institutions which he has framed for man, as well as to man himself. The affairs of government are therefore to be conducted on religious principles, as much as the ordinary affairs of life are.”

“ You would not have church and state united ?” said Mr. Potter, who had listened with great interest to what had been said.

“ By no means. The church and the state are two very different institutions. God never intended that they should be united. Their union has ever been a curse to both, though in truth, *the* church and the state have seldom, if ever, been united. The real church consists of those in every communion who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. In this sense, church and state have never been united. The union has been between the

government and some institution calling itself the church, but which, in reality, has had very little connection with the true church."

"I am afraid," said Mr. Holden, "that your principles would mix up religion with politics a little too much."


"No fear of that: all that my principles would lead to is, that we *do right* in things relating to politics, as well as in every thing else."

"Nobody can object to that," said Potter. "I hope these boys will practise what they learn here, and they will be real patriots."

After a little further conversation on general topics, the party broke up. The boys returned home, feeling that they had received instruction in important truths, though they had not been amused with interesting facts.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HAY SCALES—THE ELECTION—THE SHIP OF STATE.

HE instructions received at the old Stone House (some of which we have recorded for the benefit of our readers,) were not without their practical influence on those who listened to them. It appeared in the public spirit manifested on many occasions. A single instance will furnish an illustration.

One night,—and it was a dark and tempestuous night,—William Palmer and another boy were coming home from a visit to a house that stood a little distance from the village. As they passed the hay-scales, which were the property of the village, they saw that the door of the building connected therewith was open.

“Stop a moment,” said William; “let us fasten that door.”

“What for?” said his companion, who was

not one of Mr. Manton's pupils: "it don't belong to you."

"It belongs to the public."

"Well, then, let the public take care of it."

"It belongs to every patriot to take care of public property."

"I am not a patriot,—I'm only a boy."

"I am a patriot, or I mean to be when I get to be a man; and so I must begin now. Just help me shut the door, and hold it while I find something to set against it to keep it shut. It will be torn off the hinges if it is left swinging in this wind."

"What if the hinges are torn off? it will not be any thing out of your pocket, or your father's."

"That is nothing to the point. Just give me a lift for a moment, won't you?"

"No."

"Then go home by yourself; and I will see that I am not caught in company with such a fellow again."

The boy went on his way, and left William to do his work alone. The door was very heavy, and the wind was very high. It was with great difficulty that he got it in place, and confined it there. The rain fell in tor

rents before he reached home. He immediately retired to bed without saying any thing about the cause of his detention. This was well. He had done a good deed, and was content with having done it. He did not claim praise for it. He had no intention of saying any thing about it, unless it should become necessary. In this he should be imitated. Many destroy, in a great measure, the good effect of their good deeds, by making mention of them, and thereby claiming commendation,—I mean the good effect upon their own characters. That is greatest when the act is performed without any reference whatever to a personal motive, and when it is known only to the performer.

There was one thing in the matter above related, in which William is not to be imitated: it was the angry tone in which he bade his companion go home. You may say, he could not help being vexed with the selfish fellow: still I say, he could have avoided giving any expression to his feelings, and that would have aided him in gaining the control over them.

The next morning, as William came down from his chamber, he saw the barn of the next-

door neighbor without a roof. The wind had taken it off, and carried it some distance. "Father," said William, "was not Mr. Runyan's roof fastened on as strongly as ours?"

"Yes; I suppose it was."

"How did it come to blow off, then?"

"The door was left open, and the wind thus rushing in lifted the roof. If they had been careful to shut the doors, no damage would have been done."

"I should not wonder," said Mr. Runyan's hired man, "if the hay-scales were blown over. The door was slamming, as I passed last night."

"Why did you not stop and shut it?" said Mr. Runyan.

"The rain was coming on, and I thought I had better get under shelter. The hay-scales don't belong to me."

"They belong to the town," said William.

"Let the town take care of them, then."

"The town didn't know that the door was open."

"Can't help it," said the hired man, going to his work.

William did not get angry with the poor fellow. He called to mind the fact, that he

had received but few advantages from education, and hence was not so much to blame. He felt thankful that he himself had been subject to better influences.

When it was found that the public property had been saved by the care of some one unknown, considerable inquiry was made, but William said nothing about it. If he had been asked if he knew who secured the door, and thus saved the building, he would not have refused to answer; but as he was not asked, he felt at liberty to preserve silence. A boy has made great progress in self-culture, when he is willing to do a noble act, and have it entirely unknown.

Another instance of the public spirit infused into the boys, by conversations respecting our patriotic fathers, appeared in the care taken of the village green. They went frequently in a body, and gathered up and carried away every stick and stone, and unsightly object, and every noxious weed. Thus, the village wore an air of neatness, which contributed not a little to its beauty.

One Saturday afternoon, it was proposed to elect a president and other officers of state. The proposition came from one of Mr. Mau-

ton's pupils ; but as there was something new in it, all the boys of the school were ready to carry it into execution. Some of the members of the other schools, and some who did not attend school at all, were at the place of election, ready to exercise their rights. Several nominations for president were made, and then the ballot-box was prepared. The question, "who are entitled to vote?" then arose. There was a diversity of opinion. There were some pretty violent advocates of universal suffrage. There were others who thought there should be some restrictions. The dispute became so warm, that Howard Manton proposed that the election should be adjourned till the next Saturday. This was agreed to ; for each party hoped by so doing to gain an accession of strength.

After most of the boys had gone home, those who were accustomed to visit the Stone House, agreed to go there on Monday evening, and lay the matter before their political instructor.

They were there at the appointed time, and were cordially received. "Well," said Mr. Manton, "I am told you wish to ask me an important question."

"Yes, sir, we do," said Thomas Hawkes.

"And that question is, whether every one has a right to vote or not?"

"That is not exactly the question," said William; "we wished to know if we ought to let the members of other schools, and those who do not belong to any school, vote for president with us."

"That is a matter for you to agree upon among yourselves. It does not involve, as far as I see, any important principle. If they wish to act with you, and will behave well, it will promote harmony and good-feeling by allowing them to do so. You should not repel from your society any who will behave well while with you.

"The question, whether every citizen has a right to vote in the choice of rulers, is a question of great importance, and is well worthy of your consideration. What do you think about it, Thomas? Have all men an equal right to vote?"

"Yes, sir."

"What reason can you give?"

"Because all men are born free and equal. If all men are equal, all men have an equal right to vote."

"If all men are equal, then all men have an equal right to property:—Why should not all property be equally divided?"

"All men have an equal right to *get* property."

"You mean an equal right to get property, if they can, by honest labor?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. As no man has a right to property until he has earned it, and acquired a claim to it in some lawful way; so, no one has a right to vote until he is qualified to vote. It is not a self-evident truth, that every man has an equal right to vote for those who are to make and execute the laws. Rulers are appointed for a particular purpose: viz., to secure the ends for which civil society exists,—to guide the ship of state. Such men ought to be chosen as are qualified to perform the acts for which they are chosen: and such persons ought to choose them, as are qualified to judge of their qualifications. Suppose you are at sea. There are several hundred persons on board. The captain and mate are lost, and there is no one to command the vessel. A commander is absolutely necessary to save her and all the lives on board. No one

but one who is skilled in the service and art of navigation can save her. Suppose three-fourths of those on board know nothing about navigation,—are entirely unable to judge whether the person who wishes to be chosen captain is possessed of the requisite qualifications or not. Suppose the remaining one-fourth are able to judge,—suppose they know what are the qualifications, and who possess them: now I ask, who ought to choose the captain? Who would have a right to vote, in the case supposed?”

“Those who were capable of judging respecting the qualifications of the candidate,” said Thomas.

“Certainly. If the choice were left to the ignorant, they might choose one who would cause the loss of the ship and all on board. Now, who have a right to vote for the captain of the ship of state?”

“Those who possess the knowledge necessary to judge of his qualifications,” said William.

“I would rather say, those who are qualified to do so. I do not think that knowledge is the sole qualification. The doctrine I would lay down is, that all have a right to vote who

are qualified to vote ; and all have a right to become qualified to vote. That I understand to be the true doctrine of universal suffrage."

"A stranger has inquired for you," said Mrs. Manton, coming into the room.

"It is Judge Brown, I presume. He wrote me he should be here about this time. So, my young friends, I must bid you good-evening."

CHAPTER X.

THE PROPER MODE OF CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE
DAY.

“**S**HALL we have a holiday, on the Fourth of July?” said one of the boys, to the teacher of the school which Mr. Manton’s boys attended.

“Yes, I shall give you a holiday then,” said the teacher, “but you must study well until that day comes.”

The announcement of the fact, that there was to be no school on the Fourth, had rather a tendency to hinder study. Thoughts of what should be done on that day, filled the minds of many, when the book before them should have received their whole attention.

When the school was dismissed, the boys gathered under the shade of a chestnut tree, that overhung the school-house, and discussed at length the question, “How shall we keep Independence?”

"Let us all join together and buy ever so much powder, and get a cannon somewhere, and fire it all day," said one.

This seemed to meet the approbation of many, but two objections were made. First, the difficulty of getting "ever so much powder," and secondly, the difficulty of getting a cannon. Muskets were not uncommon in the place; but a cannon, large or small, had never been seen there. After many propositions had been made, and none of them approved, the boys separated, after having agreed to consult their parents, and come together again the next day.

"Father," said Howard Manton, to his father, as soon as he reached home, "what is the best way for us to keep Independence?"

"The day ought to be kept with thanksgiving and praise," said Mr. Manton.

"Do you think there is any thanksgiving in firing guns and making a noise?"

"None at all."

"What then do the people fire guns and shout so loud, on the Fourth, for?"

"It is impossible to give a rational reason for their conduct. No day was ever more perverted than is the anniversary of our in-

dependence. Instead of one universal burst of thanksgiving and praise, rising from the heart of a grateful people, the wild noise of riot and revelry, and drunkenness and mad excitement, is heard throughout the land. Nothing can be more displeasing to the Great Governor of the nations, who gave us our independence. Suppose a man had been a great benefactor to several of his fellow-men; suppose he had given each one a farm, and a great many other things. They ought to feel very thankful; and it would be very proper for them, on the anniversary of the day on which he gave them a deed of their farms, to go to him, and express their gratitude. Suppose, instead of so doing, they should meet together on that day, and indulge their inclinations in a way known to be very displeasing to him; suppose they should throw down his fences, stone his fruit-trees, and abuse his good name. You would think it strange; but they would not treat their benefactor any worse, than many of the people in this land treat their Benefactor. On the anniversary of that day on which they received from him the deed of their political freedom, they meet together, and spend the day in

drinking and swearing, and in practising other forms of vice, thus displeasing their Benefactor, and injuring his cause."

"It never struck me in that light before. I shall not give any thing to buy powder with."

"Burning powder is not an act in itself wrong; but no possible good, and much evil, may come from it, and hence it should not be practised. It is proper to rejoice on the anniversary of our nation's freedom. Gratitude is a joyous feeling."

"Ought not there to be religious services on that day?"

"Certainly. Our minister intends to make the experiment of a religious celebration. I hope, therefore, the boys will all be found in their places, in the house of God. You may invite them to come, after the religious services, and dine with us. After dinner, I will show them some letters, written by Washington, and other great men of the Revolution."

"Where did you get them, sir?"

"I have just received them from a friend in New York, in exchange for some relics of olden time in my possession. After we have examined the letters, and talked about their authors, we will take a sail on the pond. I


have caused the boats to be repaired with this view."

The next day, Howard communicated to the boys his father's proposal. It was received with acclamations.

The long expected day at length came. A few solitary muskets were exploded in the vicinity of the village, but the village itself was as quiet as on the Sabbath. At the usual hour for divine service, the church bell rang, and nearly all the people assembled, and joined in the services conducted by their excellent pastor. The boys then repaired to the Stone House, and spent the remainder of the day, in the manner proposed by its patriotic proprietor. Some time after sunset, they reached their homes, feeling that they had spent the day far more pleasantly and profitably, than they would have done, had they spent it in burning gunpowder, shouting, drinking, and fighting, as too many, who ought to know better, do. All agreed, that it was the best Independence Day they had ever had. When shall this nation rightly celebrate the anniversary of the birth-day of its freedom?

CHAPTER XI.

ORIGIN AND FORMATION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

“OU were earnestly engaged in some discussion or dispute in front of the school-house, as I passed,” said Mr. Manton to his son, as he came from school.

“Yes, sir,” replied Howard, “we were disputing about our government. Some said it was the best government in the world, and Hugh Potter said it was not as good as the English government.”

“What had you to say about it?”

“I said, I thought our government was the best for us. I said, I did not think it was perfect; but that it was the best government in the world for us. Do you not think so, Father?”

“Yes: but I rather think that in your dispute you were like many older persons; that is to say, you were disputing about that respecting which you had very little knowledge.”

"I know that, sir, and some of the boys said they would ask you about it; and they are coming here this evening for that purpose. Thomas said we must know more about government, before we dispute about it."

"That was a very sensible remark. If people never disputed except upon subjects with which they were acquainted, there would be far less disputation in the world. Truly great men are seldom fond of disputation."

In the evening the youthful circle assembled, and Mr. Manton was informed that they wished him to tell them something about the government of these United States.

"I suppose," said Mr. Manton, "that you all know when the Federal government was formed?"

The boys kept silence. Some of them looked as though they did not know the date alluded to by Mr. Manton. At length, Thomas Hawkes said, "I, for one, do not know."

"When was our present government formed?" said Mr. Manton. "Let any one answer who knows."

"It was formed on the Fourth of July 1776," said one.

"The Declaration of Independence was then made ; but that is a very different thing from forming a government. We live under the Federal constitution, and I asked when that constitution was made."

"It was made in the year 1787," said Richard.

"True ; and that was eleven years after the Declaration of Independence."

"Had we no government during those eleven years ?" said William.

"Yes : before the Declaration of Independence, we had a Continental Congress, which assumed such powers of government as were necessary to carry on the war ; and in the year 1781, Articles of Confederation were entered into by all the states, and the government thus formed, continued until the adoption of the Federal Constitution."

"Then we have had two constitutions," said Howard ; "I did not know that."

"The Articles of Confederation were not called a constitution, though they were, in fact, the constitution of the government that existed previously to the present one."

“Was that government very different from our present government?” said Richard.

“Yes, it was different in many respects, and very defective; otherwise, the wise men of our country would not have taken the trouble to form a new one.”

“Did there not use to be a President under that government?”

“There was a President of Congress, but not a President of the United States. The Congress of the Confederation consisted of only one House, and the President was the presiding officer. The office was not more important than that of Speaker of the House of Representatives.”

“Why is Congress divided into two houses now?” said Howard. “It seems to me that the old way was the best. I should think business would be done much faster, when it has to go through one house instead of two. Now it sometimes happens that when a bill has passed the House of Representatives, it is a long time before it gets through the Senate.”

“And sometimes it does not get through at all,” said Mr. Manton.

“Yes, sir ”

“And so you think laws would be made faster if they had to pass only one house?”

“Yes, sir; do you not think they would?”

“Certainly; but it is desirable that laws should be made *well*; it is more important that they should be made well, than that they should be made quickly. A single man could make laws faster than any assembly of men; but you would hardly be willing, on that account, to commit the making of the laws to one man, would you?”

“Oh no, sir.”

“The object of having the Legislature divided into two houses, is to prevent hasty and unwise legislation. As whatever originates in one house must be considered and passed by the other, before it can become a law, it is seldom that a law is passed without due consideration.”

“Are there not some hasty and unwise laws passed?” said Richard.

“Yes; and if this is the case where there are two houses, much oftener would it be the case, if there were but one. But a bill does not become a law when it has been passed by a majority in both houses of Congress. What else is necessary, William?”

"The President must sign it," said William.

"Yes, he must give it his signature, or it does not become a law. This provision of the Constitution was introduced in order to furnish still another check upon hasty legislation."

"It seems to me," said Richard, "that one man's voice ought not to weigh down those of both houses of Congress. Are there not sometimes men in Congress who know as much or more than the President?"

"Yes, that may often happen; still the veto power, as it is called, is sometimes a wholesome check. The President cannot defeat the will of Congress by the exercise of this power. If two-thirds of the members of both houses pass the bill, it becomes a law without his signature."

"I heard a man at the blacksmith's shop say, that it was a kingly power; and that it ought not to exist in a republican government. He said it would do well enough for the king of England to have the power, but that a republican President ought not to have it."

"The framers of the Constitution thought best to give the President this power, though

it is possible, that if they were living now, and had their work to do over again, they would withhold it. As to the king of England, it may be interesting to you to know, that while he possesses power to veto any act of Parliament, yet that power has not been exercised for about a century. But we must not spend our time in talking about the provisions of the Constitution, when our object is to consider its origin and formation."

"Who first proposed the matter?" said Howard.

"It would be difficult to say. Nearly all the leading men in the country felt the necessity of a change in the matter of government, and many expressed their opinions through the press. The first active measures that led to the Convention which formed the Constitution, were taken by James Madison. His measures were earnestly seconded by Alexander Hamilton. Perhaps these two men had more to do with the origin of the Constitution than any other two men. They acted cordially together in forming the government, though they differed much in their views of policy after it was established. In February, 1787, Congress passed a resolution, recom-

mending a Convention to meet on the second Monday of May ensuing, to revise the Articles of Confederation in such a manner as was necessary to meet the wants and preserve the union of the states. All the states, except Rhode Island, chose delegates to the Convention. The Convention was composed of about forty men, for the most part, the wisest that could be found. Washington was chosen President of the Convention."

"Were all the great generals of the Revolution there?"

"No: the work to be performed was a civil work. Therefore civilians, and not military men, were chosen to the work."

"Washington was a military man."

"True, but he was not without experience in civil affairs: besides, his services had been so pre-eminent, and his influence with the country so great, that no system of government would have received the sanction of the people, if he had not taken part in its construction."

"Did Washington take a very active part in the Convention?" said Howard.

"He did not take an active part in the debates: his situation, as the presiding officer,

forbade it. He spoke but once during the sessions of the Convention. It was on the subject of the ratio of representation, in the House of Representatives. Some thought there should be one representative for every forty thousand inhabitants, and it was so fixed in the Constitution, as reported by the committee. A member moved to strike out forty, and insert thirty thousand. Washington then rose, and gave a few reasons why he should like to have it fixed at thirty thousand."

"Did his proposition pass?"

"Yes; by an unanimous vote, the number was fixed at thirty thousand."

"Do you not suppose the Convention would have done any thing that Washington asked them to do?" said William.

"His opinion, and his requests, would, doubtless, have had great weight with the members of the Convention; but they were men capable of thinking for themselves, and felt the responsibility under which they acted. They would have followed Washington's wishes, so far as their judgment and sense of duty would allow."

"Were there many religious men in the Convention?" said Richard.

“I do not know how many.”

“Did they have prayers, as they do in Congress?”

“They did not ; and, as this has been the subject of some misrepresentation, or, at least of some misapprehension, I am glad you have mentioned it. Dr. Franklin proposed, that daily prayers be offered ; but the motion was not carried. The reason was, that the Convention had no funds to pay for the services of a chaplain, and they were not willing to ask one to serve for nothing.”

“Would it not have been better, if they had had prayers?”

“Yes : so solemn and important an act, as the formation of a constitution of government for a great nation, should have been begun, and continued with prayer. There were praying men in the Convention, who, I doubt not, earnestly sought the blessing of God upon their labors : still, it would have been better, if the sessions of the Convention had been opened daily with prayer. The ministers of the Gospel in Philadelphia would, I doubt not, have willingly performed that service without compensation. I will get a book, and read to you Dr Franklin’s remarks, with

which he prefaced his motion, that prayers be offered. This motion was not made at the opening of the Convention. The Convention had been in session for some time, and it seemed as if it was impossible for the members to agree upon any plan of government. Even Washington began to think, that they should be obliged to give up in despair, and go home without accomplishing any thing. While things were in this state, Dr. Franklin arose and said :—

“ ‘Mr. President, the small progress we have made after four or five weeks’ close attendance, and continual reasonings with each other, our different sentiments on almost every subject is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding. In the situation of this assembly, groping, as it were in the dark, to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us ; how has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights, to illuminate our understanding ? In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room, for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were

heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence, we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace, on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we forgotten that powerful friend? or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more I see of this truth, that GOD GOVERNS IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN. And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this; and I also believe, that without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building, no better than the builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our little, local, partial interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and byword, down to future ages. And what is worse mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing

governments by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly, every morning, before we proceed to business ; and that one or more of the clergy of this city, be requested to officiate in that service.'

"Such was the language of Dr. Franklin, one of the wisest philosophers who have ever lived. If a minister of the Gospel had made these remarks, they would not have been any the less true ; but to some they would have carried less weight than when uttered by the sage philosopher, who was never accused of superstition or fanaticism. He was fully convinced of the truth that God governs in the affairs of men, and that his blessing is essential to national prosperity. This truth, many of the politicians of the present day, seem to disbelieve—at least they neglect it. When rulers and people forget, or neglect this truth, then will adversity and trouble soon come upon them."

"I should think," said Howard, "that after

such a speech from such a man, they would have voted to have prayers."

"It has been stated on good authority, that the reason why the motion was not carried, was the one I mentioned just now, viz., that the Convention had no funds with which to pay a chaplain: it was an insufficient reason certainly. But you wish to know something about the manner in which the Constitution was made. In order to know all about it, you must read the record of the debates which was made by Mr. Madison. One of the first rules passed by the Convention was, that no member should give any account of any thing that took place in the Convention."

"Why was such a rule passed?" said William Palmer.

"It was desirable on many accounts. It left the free members to express their opinions on all subjects that came up, and secured them from any undue influence from without. Mr. Madison, a member of the Convention from Virginia, foreseeing that the debates would be very interesting to posterity, spent his leisure hours in making full records of the proceedings, and left the same to be published after his death."

"Will you please to tell us who were some of the greatest men in the Convention?" said Richard.

"All the members of the Convention were distinguished men, in their respective states, and many of them were well known to the whole country. There were Washington, and Franklin, and Madison, and Hamilton, and Randolph, and Sherman, and Ellsworth, and King, and the Pinckney's, and the Morrises, and Livingston, and many others, scarcely less distinguished for talents and public services."

"I never heard of the Morrises," said Howard.

"That proves that you know but little about the great men of the Revolution. I had reference to Robert Morris of Pennsylvania, and to Gouverneur Morris of New York. I doubt whether there was any one man, after Washington, who contributed more to the success of the Revolution, than did Robert Morris."

"Was he a great general?" said William.

"No, he never was in the army. He was the great financier of the Revolution; that is, he was instrumental in furnishing the means for feeding clothing, and paying the army.

Money is as necessary as men, in order to carry on war. The services of Morris in this department were very great. He did what no other man in the country could have done. On one occasion, when there was no money in the treasury, and nothing could be purchased on the credit of Congress, he pledged his own private fortune, and thus procured supplies, and kept the army from dissolution. His life ought to be written, and his services and example set before the young."

"What was the first thing the Convention did?" said Howard.

"The first thing, was to choose Washington for their presiding officer; the next thing, was to fix upon some rules of procedure, one of which I have alluded to. Mr. Randolph of Virginia, then made a speech, in which he enumerated the defects of the confederation, and then offered fifteen resolutions. These resolutions embodied the substance of a plan of government, conceived by Mr. Madison."

"If Mr. Madison was the author of the plan, why did he not propose it to the Convention himself?" said Richard.

"He did not think it wise to do so. Dr. Franklin says, that he always found it best

to have some other person bring forward the plans that he had formed. There are many reasons, why this is the best way. I will not dwell upon them now, but would exhort you to follow the example of those wise men. When you have any valuable object to accomplish, consider what is the best way to proceed, in order to accomplish it. You will find it wise to keep yourself out of view as much as possible. Most young persons love to make themselves prominent. When they have something to be done, they wish to have it known that they do it. Thus they often throw obstacles in the way of accomplishing their objects. The true way is, to fix the attention on the best way of doing the thing to be done. Think not of yourself, but of the end to be gained. So that that end be gained, care not who has the credit of it. If Franklin, and Madison, and other wise men had labored to get the credit of all the good things they did, they never would have accomplished as much as they did."

"Was the plan of government proposed by Mr. Randolph, the same as that under which we live?" said Richard.

It differed from it in several important

respects. It proposed that the National Legislature should consist of two houses. The members of the first house, were to be elected by the people of the several states. The members of the second house, were to be elected by the first house from a proper number nominated by the state Legislatures. A National Executive was to be chosen by the National Legislature. There was to be a National Judiciary—the judges to be chosen by the National Legislature. The Executive, and a convenient number of the judges, were to form a council of revision, who were to examine every act of the National Legislature, before it should become a law. In the government under which we live, the National Legislature, as you well know, consists of two houses; the members of the one chosen by the people of the states, the members of the other chosen by the Legislatures of the states. The Executive is chosen by the people, the judges are appointed by the President and Senate, and there is no council of revision.”

“What did Mr. Madison think would be the use of such a council?”

“I suppose the principal thing was, to see that every act was constitutional. If the

council declared a law to be unconstitutional, it was to be null and void."

"Who decides whether an act of Congress is constitutional or not, now?"

"The Supreme Court of the United States, is the tribunal appointed by the Constitution, for that purpose. When a case comes before that court under a law of Congress, and the court decides that the law conflicts with the provisions of the Constitution, they dismiss the case, declaring the law to be null and void."

"Has the Supreme Court then more power than Congress has?"

"No; but it has power to decide whether an act of Congress is in accordance with the Constitution or not. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and the Supreme Court is the interpreter of that law. But I will proceed in my account of the formation of the Constitution. Mr. Randolph, as I said, offered fifteen resolutions for the consideration of the Convention. Mr. Pinckney of South Carolina, then presented a plan of government. Of this plan, I am not able to give you an account. The resolutions of Mr. Randolph were debated from day to day, until the

13th of June. By that time the members, or a majority of them, had agreed upon nineteen resolutions, which contained the substance of a plan of government."

"Was it woven into the Constitution?" said William.

"Not as a whole. The plan embraced in those resolutions, was in brief, as follows:—The Legislature or Congress, was to consist of two houses:—the lower house to be chosen by the people for three years, the upper house to be chosen by the state Legislatures, for *seven* years. A National Executive was to be chosen for *seven* years. He was to be ineligible for a second term, and to possess powers similar to those possessed by the President of the United States. There was to be a National Judiciary, with suitable powers. The Constitution was to be submitted to assemblies in each state, chosen by the people for that purpose."

"They had made some progress towards forming a Constitution," said Howard.

"They had indeed, and but few know how great difficulty there was in making that progress. You must remember, that some of the members were for revising the old Articles

of Confederation, and were opposed to forming a new government. But a majority were soon convinced, that the Confederation must be given up. Accordingly, the first resolution that secured a majority of votes, was this:— ‘Resolved, that a National Government ought to be established, consisting of a Supreme Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary.’ Still, some of the minority brought forward a plan for revising the Articles of Confederation, and the two plans were debated from the 15th, to the 19th of June, when there was again a decided vote in favor of the national plan. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, were in favor of it; and New York, and New Jersey, and Delaware were against it. The vote of Maryland was divided.

“Were the states present in Convention?” said Richard, doubtingly.

“They were present by their delegates. Each state sent as many delegates to the Convention, as it chose. When they came to vote, they voted by states. Each state had one vote. A majority of the delegates from a state determined the vote of that state.

When the delegates of any state were equally divided, the vote of that state was lost.

“ Though a majority of the Convention had voted to proceed to the formation of a National Government, and had come to an agreement, as we have seen, in respect to some of its prominent features, yet their work was far from being done. To agree upon the details of the general plan which they had adopted, was a work of the greatest difficulty. So great was the diversity of opinion, and of opposed interests, that it was thought to be impossible for them to go on. Even Washington, who seldom desponded, could say, ‘ I almost despair of seeing a favorable issue to the proceedings of the Convention, and I do therefore repent having had any agency in the business.’ But the patriots fainted not. They continued their discussions, and by reasonings and mutual concessions, they so far came to an agreement by the 23rd of July, that a committee was appointed to prepare and report a Constitution. The Convention then adjourned to the 6th of August, that the committee might have time to prepare their report.”

“Was the work done when that report was made?” said Richard.

“Far from it. That committee reported a Constitution of twenty-three articles, embodying the substance of the resolutions passed by the Convention. The Convention then debated this Constitution, article by article, for more than four weeks, and made many alterations and amendments. A committee was then appointed to arrange the articles, and revise the style of the instrument.”

“Who gave to the Constitution its present form?”

“Gouverneur Morris. Mr. Madison, in a letter to Prof. Sparks, says, ‘The finish given to the style and arrangement of the Constitution, fairly belongs to Mr. Morris. If it was an honor to draft the Declaration of Independence, it was not less an honor to draft the Constitution of the United States.’ Thus, after about four months’ hard labor, the Constitution was finished.”

“Did most of the people like it?” said Howard.

“There were many persons who were strongly opposed to it; and it was no sooner published, than it was made the object of vio-

lent attacks from various quarters. Among the most prominent of its defenders, through the press, were Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison. Conventions were called in the states for ratifying or rejecting it. In some states, the opposition was so great, that it was ratified by a bare majority. In the convention of the state of New York, there were thirty-one votes for it, and twenty-seven against it."

"What could they say against it?"

"They said a great deal. The power given to the President, was one thing that they found fault with. They professed to be afraid that he would destroy the liberty of the country. I do not think the Constitution would have been adopted by a sufficient number of states, to cause it to go into operation, had it not been well understood, that Washington would be the first President. So you see that Washington not only saved our country in time of the Revolution, but he also saved it from the perils that would have followed the rejection of the Constitution,—perils which would perhaps have destroyed our national existence. We can never be sufficiently thankful to God for having raised up for us

such a military, and civil leader, as Washington."

"Do you not think it strange, that more men do not try to be like him in our time?" said William.

"I do; and I hope that you, my young friends, will not be of that number who are loud in the praises of Washington, but take no pains to cultivate his spirit, and follow his example."

"Do you think our government will last a great many years longer, unless our public men do become more like Washington?"

"The safety of the Republic depends as much upon the character of its citizens in general, as upon the character of public men. In fact, the character of its public men depends upon the character of its citizens at large. If all the people are patriotic, and virtuous, and intelligent, they will rarely put any but patriotic, virtuous, and intelligent men in office. When, therefore, we are laboring to render the people patriotic and virtuous, we are efficiently promoting the prosperity of our country, and the perpetuity of her free Institutions."

"What is the best way to go to work, to

render the people patriotic, and virtuous?" said Richard.

"In the first place, we must be patriotic and virtuous ourselves. Then the most important thing is, to bring them to fear God, and to act from a sense of religious obligation. If you can bring a man to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, it will not be difficult to make a good patriot of him. Christian patriotism, such as was possessed by Washington, and Jay, and Witherspoon, and Livingston, and Adams, and many others, is the only patriotism that is secure amid the corruptions and temptations of public life. Again, it is a distinctly revealed principle of the Divine administration, that he blesses nations, for the sake of those who fear and serve him. If there had been found ten righteous persons in Sodom, the city would not have been destroyed, but would have been spared for their sakes. The greater the number of pious persons there are in a country, the greater the blessings God will bestow upon it for their sakes. Now there are many Christians in this country, and we may hope that, for their sakes, God will continue to bless us, and every additional Christian in-

creases the probability that he will do so ; that is, increase the number of those, for whose sake God will bless us. Whenever, therefore, we are pursuing a course adapted to promote the conversion of men to God, we are pursuing a course adapted most efficiently to promote the welfare of our beloved country. Let us then spread the Bible far and wide ; let us bring its truths in contact with the minds of men :—thus shall we be instrumental in forming patriots of the highest order,—thus shall we promote the salvation of our country.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NATURE OF THE CONSTITUTION.

MR. MANTON'S young visitors were so much interested in the account given them of the origin and formation of the Constitution, that they requested him to allow them to hear him discourse for them upon the subject. Some of the boys would have been better pleased to have heard stories about wars, and dreadful accidents; but most of them had a desire to acquire useful information. They were satisfied that they could never become useful citizens, and qualified to take part in the management of civil affairs, unless they had some knowledge respecting the great charter of our liberties, the Constitution of the United States.

Mr. Manton was very much pleased to learn from his son, that the boys desired to receive further information, and requested them to come the next evening, as he was making ar-

rangements for a long journey, which would cause him to be absent several months.

The boys came, and Mr. Potter came with his son. "I beg pardon, if I intrude," said he to Mr. Manton, as he entered the room; "my boy told me what he could remember of what you told him last evening, and I saw it was just what I need to know as well as he. I have little time for reading, and have no books if I had. I shall be a voter next year, and I want to become qualified to be a voter: I want to know what I am about, when I come to take part in affairs as a citizen of the country."

"I am glad to see you," said Mr. Manton. "I wish all our native citizens had as sound views in regard to the importance of political knowledge. The boys are at liberty to ask any questions they please, and I hope you will do the same."

"I guess I shall get hints enough to think about, without troubling you with any questions."

"I think, that at the close of our conversation last evening, I told you something about the adoption of the Constitution by the several states."

“Yes, sir,” said Robert, “you told us there were many persons opposed to the adoption of it, and that in the convention of New York, it was adopted by a majority of only four votes.”

“The majority in Massachusetts was very small; also, in Virginia, Patrick Henry opposed it there with all his power.”

“Was not Patrick Henry a patriot?” said one.

“Yes, as pure a patriot as the country contained; but, in his judgment, the Constitution was faulty, and hence he opposed its adoption. Mr. Madison was one of the chief defenders of the Constitution in the Virginia convention, and more than any other one man contributed to its adoption.”

“Was there as great opposition to the Constitution in the other states?”

“It was nowhere so strongly opposed as in New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia. In New Jersey, Delaware, and Georgia, it was adopted by an unanimous vote.

“Do you not think, sir, that those states deserve credit for adopting it unanimously?”

“It was certainly creditable to the people of those states, that they should so readily and

cordially adopt an instrument which has proved so beneficial in its influence. The other states, at the present time, are not less attached to the Constitution than those—nor did they, when it was adopted, yield a less cheerful obedience to its requisitions. The Constitution received large majorities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and South Carolina. North Carolina rejected it, and Rhode Island refused to call a convention to consider even the question of its adoption.”

“What became of those states? Did they not belong to the United States any longer?” said Howard.

“When the new government went into operation, those two states were not members of the Union. They were, with respect to the United States, foreign nations—that is, they had no more connection with the government of the United States than England or France had. They did not, however, remain in that position long. They saw the salutary workings of the Constitution, and called conventions and adopted it. Then the whole thirteen states were united again under the Constitution.”

“Can any one of the states withdraw from

the Union, whenever it chooses?" said Richard.

"No, except in circumstances which would justify a revolution. The people of all the states are bound to obey the laws of the United States in preference to their own, unless they become so oppressive as to authorize a revolution;—just as the people of England are under obligation to obey the laws of their government, unless they become so oppressive as to authorize a revolution and an overturning of the government."

"When is it lawful to resort to a revolution?"

"It is difficult to lay down any precise rule: the oppression and injustice must be great, and the prospect of success must also be good. Men are not authorized to attempt a revolution, unless the prospect is, that the evil attending it will be less than would result from enduring the oppression and injustice. If every act of injustice on the part of rulers justified a revolution, and that principle were acted upon, the world would never see a moment's peace."

"I don't quite understand what you said about a state not having a right to withdraw

from the Union," said Potter. "The states, as I understand it, are united by a league or treaty. The Constitution is a sort of treaty among the states. Now if there is a treaty between England and France, and one of them violates the treaty, the other is released from it,—need hold itself no longer bound by it. So with the states: if one state find that the league is violated, it may withdraw. Am I right?"

"No; your error lies in regarding the Constitution as a treaty between the states, whereas it is a constitution of government for the people of the United States. It was adopted by the people of the United States. 'WE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,' is the language of the preamble, 'DO ORDAIN AND ESTABLISH THIS CONSTITUTION FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.' The people of the United States in their sovereign capacity ordained and established the Constitution, and they alone can repeal it."

"Suppose," said Potter, "Congress passes a law that does not agree with a state law. The people cannot obey both: what are they to do?"

"They are to obey the law of Congress, if

it be constitutional—that is, if it be a law which the Constitution authorizes Congress to enact. The words of the Constitution are, ‘ This Constitution, and the laws of the United States, which shall be made in pursuance thereof,—shall be the supreme law of the land. And the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, any thing in the constitution and laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.’ This makes express provision for the case you supposed.”

“ Well, suppose Congress makes a law that is not constitutional : may not the state Legislature set it aside, in that case ? ”

“ No ; for that would leave it in a great measure, voluntary with the states, whether they would regard the acts of Congress or not, which was the very state of things which the Constitution was made to correct. The Constitution has, as I have said once before, appointed a final interpreter, viz., the Supreme Court of the United States. If the people of any state believe a law of Congress to be unconstitutional, they can bring a case under it before the Supreme Court ; and if, in the judgment of that court, it is not constitutional, they will declare it null and void. If they declare

it to be constitutional, then it must be obeyed, any state law to the contrary notwithstanding."

"What is meant by nullification?" said Howard.

"It is a barbarous word, which we now very seldom hear used, and I hope we shall hear it less frequently in future. It was the term used to express the right claimed by some for a state to nullify all laws of Congress, which the people of that state may deem unconstitutional. There are some few advocates of that doctrine; but the great majority of the people of the United States reject it, and hold to the view of the Constitution which I have just given you."

"Has the Constitution ever been violated?" said Howard.

"I think some laws have been passed, which the framers of the Constitution did not intend should ever be passed; but in almost every case, there had been ground for debate on the subject. The more the people study the Constitution and understand it, the less liable will the legislators be to depart from its provisions. It is worthy of every man's study."

At this moment a gentleman called, who had some business to transact with Mr. Man-

ton, which he said would occupy him for the remainder of the evening. "I must leave you, my young friends, and it will probably be some time before I shall see you again. If I am spared to return from the journey I am about to undertake, I shall be happy to see you here again. I may never return. God knows what is best for me. I have commended to you the study of the Constitution, the supreme law of our land. There is a still higher law, which is still more worthy of your study, the law of God. The provisions of the Constitution are wise, and their observance is adapted to promote the happiness of the nation; but they are far less wise than the provisions of the law of God. Obey that law, and you will be happy. Consider at once, as null and void, every law and rule that conflicts with the law of God. While you study to be true patriots remember that '*a Christian is the highest style of man.*'"

He then shook them all cordially by the hand and withdrew.





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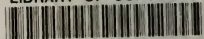
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